

NORMAN

THE MODERATE RISE AND TRAGIC FALL OF A NEW YORK FIXER

by

Joseph Cedar

2

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - EARLY MORNING

2

It is still dark outside.

The CNN clock over Columbus Circle shows: 5:25am.

NORMAN OPPENHEIMER (60) is standing next to a bench in Central Park. He has EARPHONES in both ears. In his hand we notice a METAL BUSINESS CARD HOLDER.

At this hour it is either fitness fanatics or true workaholics who need to be in the office by 7am, exercising in the park. Norman is watching these fanatics pass by.

3

INT. STARBUCKS - DAY

3

A shot of a PEN writing on a PAPER NAPKIN: It is a diagram with lines and circles that loosely follows the names, numbers and institutions as we hear them:

NORMAN (O.S.)

This is the idea, the Israeli government is withholding about three hundred million dollars of tax receivables from the Palestinian Authority. My idea is to find someone here, someone like Jo Wilf, or an Arthur Taub, who would buy that debt. Pay the Palestinians eighty or ninety cents on the dollar, assuming that the Palestinians will take what they can get at this point, and that the Israeli government would have no choice but to honor their debt to an American financial institution.

We see PHILIP COHEN (40) listening to Norman in a crowded Starbucks with a polite but very skeptical look on his face.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

(passing the napkin to Philip)

Everybody wins. The Palestinians get their money. Israel isn't making any political concessions, and lets say it is Wilf - he collects thirty or forty million or worst case scenario - just the interest for that debt.

PHILIP

Why would the Palestinians agree to get less than the full amount?

NORMAN

Because it is better than getting nothing.

Philip thinks about this for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

PHILIP
That is actually a pretty good
idea.

NORMAN
It is. I've thought it through. I
just need someone who can do it.
(pointing at Wilf's name
on the napkin)
Isn't this the scale of the kind of
deals Wilf is looking for?

4 **EXT. CENTRAL PARK - EARLY MORNING**

4

A tight shot of Norman in Central Park, smiling, recalling
this conversation with Philip. There is a strange excitement
in his expression. He pulls the earphones out of his ears.
Then back to:

5 **INT. STARBUCKS - DAY**

5

PHILIP
Yes, but I don't know if he would
get involved in a political
situation like this... I mean, I
know he wouldn't.

NORMAN
All I want to do is present it to
him. I really think it serves
everyone. When something is good,
it's good. This is good.

PHILIP
I don't have direct contact with
Wilf. You know that, right?

NORMAN
But you have friends there. Don't
you? This is your circle...

Philip has to consider this for a moment.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
If you're not comfortable doing
this, I'll understand. I can ask a
few other people I know... But I
wanted to show it to you first.

PHILIP
Bill Kavish. Do you know him? He
works for Wilf. He is a friend.
Have you heard his name?

NORMAN
Yeah. Maybe. Why do I know that
name?

6

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - EARLY MORNING

6

Back to Norman. One of the runners he sees is BILL KAVISH(35).

We follow Bill, FROM NORMAN'S POV, as he finishes his run and stops by a tree to stretch his muscles.

We focus in on Bill's energized face as we continue to hear:

PHILIP (V.O.)

You know his family. His father was Henry Kavish. You remember him? He was a fund-raiser for Ort in the Eighties. He got into some kind of trouble. They caught him taking some money. I don't know exactly what happened there, but they fired him, his wife left him, his kids turned their backs on him. He died alone and penniless. Bill is his youngest son.

Norman is fixated on Bill's face, his movement, studying him with genuine human interest, as if looking for the emotional scar his father left on him.

Norman has taken out one of his BUSINESS CARDS, holding it between his fingers.

7

INT. STARBUCKS - DAY

7

Back to Philip and Norman.

NORMAN

Can you introduce me to Bill?

PHILIP

I haven't spoken to him in a long time...

NORMAN

There is nothing to lose. If he is not interested, he'll say he is not interested... But if he is... You never know...

PHILIP

I can give you Bill's e-mail, but I'd prefer not to send a formal introduction. We represent clients who do business with them... I don't want to be in a position where I'm asking him for a favor.

NORMAN

You're doing him a favor... But okay. That's fine. Can I say we are related? Can I say I'm your uncle?

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

PHILIP
No. Don't make it a family thing.
It doesn't sound good... It might
not be a good idea to mention my
name.

Norman clearly needs more than that. And Philip has to give him something.

PHILIP (CONT'D)
You can say you know me. But please
don't tell him you got his address
from me.

Norman nods his head with polite gratitude. Philip senses his distress as he gets up to leave.

PHILIP (CONT'D)
I'm sorry I can't be more helpful.
It's tough. You're like a drowning
man waving at an ocean-liner. How
do you get it to see you? Jo Wilf
is an ocean-liner. He doesn't see
any of us...

NORMAN
But I'm a good swimmer. Don't
forget that. As long as my head is
above water, I know how to tread...

With a pat on Norman's back, Philip leaves.

8 **EXT. CENTRAL PARK - EARLY MORNING**

8

We're back at the park where Bill, still stretching, notices Norman staring at him. Norman raises his hand in an innocent, friendly gesture.

Bill has no idea who he is. He nods his head and continues stretching, a bit suspicious of the friendly stranger.

Norman approaches him, handing him his BUSINESS CARD.

NORMAN
Good morning, Bill. Norman
Oppenheimer.

BILL
What the fuck? You're stalking me
now??

NORMAN
I only need a few minutes of your
time. I know you are busy. Philip
Cohen might have mentioned me...

BILL
No. Excuse me. This is my private
time... please respect that. Call
the office.

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN

I'm in touch with your secretary twice a day. Very nice lady, but You don't return my calls. What am I supposed to do?

BILL

Let it go! Give up. Does Philip know you're here? How did you even find me?

NORMAN

It's a good business opportunity. Why should I let it go? I wouldn't be here if it wasn't time sensitive. Just give me a minute to explain. A very high official, I can't mention his name right now, came to me with an offer to sell his country's tax receivables to a third party...

Bill can't believe he's in this situation. He looks at Norman as if he is a crazy man.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Eighty cents on the dollar...

BILL

I'm sorry. I have to leave... Excuse me. This is unacceptable.

NORMAN

(as Bill walks away)
Bill, I wouldn't be doing this if I didn't think it is worth Jo's time. Don't trust me, trust Philip. Sometimes good things come in surprising ways... You never know... You never know, right? Worse comes to worse, he kicks me out the door...

BILL

(turning around)
No - worse comes to worse, he kicks ME out the door. It's my job to keep people like you away. Don't you get that? Please, respect my position. Stop. Just stop. I'm sorry. But I don't know what else to say.

Bill waits to see if Norman is internalizing the finality of his response.

NORMAN

So I'll tell my partners we had a good conversation... and we'll see what happens. Okay?

Bill shakes his head with disbelief and walks away.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

NORMAN (CONT'D)
Thank you, Bill.

9 EXT. 57TH ST. AND 7TH AVE - DAY

9

Norman is standing across the street from a DINER called BROOKLYN DINER at the floor of a huge office building.

He is looking through the windows of the diner at Bill Kavish, now dressed in his business suit, sitting with a few other businessmen in one of the booths. The man in the center of this Breakfast gathering is JO WILF (70), authoritative, calm, allowing the younger men around him to do all the talking.

Norman pulls out his phone and dials.

NORMAN
I got a meeting!

10 INT. PHILIP'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

10

PHILIP
With Jo Wilf??

Right before Norman answers, Bill Kavish raises his eyes and catches Norman's glance, standing outside. Bill give him a viciously protective look.

NORMAN
Better. With Arthur Taub.

We sense that Philip doesn't believe Norman.

PHILIP
If Jo Wilf is an ocean-liner,
Arthur is a nuclear submarine...
How did you manage that?

NORMAN
(walking away)
I told you, I'm a good swimmer.

Our view expands to see Norman walking away and blending into the Midtown bustle. This image gradually goes out of focus.

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11 OMITTED

11

12 **INT. BARCLAYS MANHATTAN HEADQUARTERS- MORNING** 12

Norman walks into this vast, intimidating lobby.

He approaches a reception desk underneath a sign that reads:
"Barclays Oil and Gas Exploration Conference"

Norman causally stands in line with a few other business people waiting to register.

13 **INT. CONFERENCE AUDITORIUM - DAY - MOMENTS LATER** 13

Norman has a name-tag over his chest pocket. It reads: NORMAN OPPENHEIMER

He wanders into a medium size auditorium in the middle of a panel discussion, quietly finding a seat in the back of the room.

THE ROOM IS FULL OF BANKERS AND FINANCE EXECUTIVES. From a distance Norman blends in, but a closer look at how he is dressed, exposes that he clearly does not belong.

On stage, with a backdrop of images of massive oil drilling rigs, there is a MODERATOR and a GUEST SPEAKER--

RON MAOR(65) a minister in the Israeli Parliament.

They are discussing geopolitics and the energy market, but our focus is Norman's POV, scanning the room.

He is hunting for something, focusing on different individuals, men and women, their name-tags, their laptops, gadgets, briefcases, shoes, different items that catch his attention. While in the B.G.--

RON MAOR

(heavy Israeli accent)

I told the American leadership, at a very high level, probably more than half a year ago. Go to the Russians. They hold the keys. They know the commanders of these units of chemical warfare on a first name basis. Some of them are married to Russian women. The most effective way to protect this potentially dangerous arsenal, is by getting into contact with the Russians. But it should be a real contact without a drop of arrogance. Understanding in advance that, okay, America lead in Iraq, Europe lead in Libya, now ask the Russians to lead and accept the fact that they will have a role in resolving this conflict.

MODERATOR

Suppose someone says you can't trust them.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MODERATOR (CONT'D)

You would say it is not a matter of trust but of national interest...

Norman has fished a MIKE AND IKE candy out of his coat pocket. He sucks on it without calling attention to himself.

MAOR

There is clearly a problem, it relates to the Chinese and the Far East as well. It is a major question in the next decade for all the other allies around the Pacific Rim. Is America pushing Russia away from the West and into the arms of China? Some natural gas experts in this room will say that is exactly what they're doing by encouraging a pipeline between Israel and Turkey. Inevitably you will have a symbiotic relationship with China, based on currency trade, whatever... But as I always say, when dealing with global interests, we shouldn't be playing backgammon, *shesh-besh*, you know. Where you roll the dice and hope for the best. We should be playing chess.

As this is going on, Norman has locked his glance on:

MICHA ESHEL.

He is in his mid 40s, handsome, well dressed. He is sitting in the front row near the door, with an expression that is saying that he has heard all this before and that he is not very impressed with Mr. Maor on stage.

INT. OUTSIDE THE AUDITORIUM - LATER

A buffet lunch is being served. The ATTENDEES are mingling.

Maor is the center of the room, everyone is trying to get a word with him.

But there is a SMALLER GROUP OF PEOPLE greeting Eshel as well on the other side of the room.

It is as if these two important men, Eshel and Maor, while polite to each other and perfectly pleasant, are actually on opposing teams.

Norman is following this dynamic very carefully, noticing how they elegantly avoid eye contact with each other.

At a certain point Maor is escorted out of the room by his security guards and entourage.

Eshel watches Maor leave. While Norman is watching Eshel.

15 **INT. AUDITORIUM - LATER**

15

The room is now three-quarters empty.

In this panel, Micha Eshel is the main attraction.

He speaks with much less pathos and with considerable humor and ease. THE FEW PEOPLE that stayed to hear him, seem to enjoy his sarcasm. Norman is sitting in the back, listening.

ESHTEL

The distinguished minister speaking before me, who I have a great deal of respect for, seems to know a lot about everything, and it is hard to argue with him... god forbid, I'm not saying he is wrong... China, Russia, America... He must know what he is talking about. He is my boss, after all. And a very good chess player.

(slightest smile. Audience laughs)

But you know, George Bernard Shaw once said - some people see the way things are and ask why. I see how things should be and ask - why not?! Mr. Maor is very good at describing the world as it is. If you ask me, I think our job is to discuss how the world *should* be.

16 **INT. BARCLAYS MANHATTAN HEADQUARTERS - LOBBY - LATER**

16

Eshel is accepting compliments from the few people who are walking with him toward the exit.

Norman is tailing behind.

He follows Eshel out the doors, watching him as he says goodbye to all the people around him - surprisingly remaining all alone on the Midtown sidewalk, without any entourage or security. Eshel puts on his sunglasses, takes in the busy street as if deciding where to go, then heads Uptown.

Norman peels off his name-tag from his jacket and follows Eshel.

17 **EXT. OUTSIDE BARCLAYS HEADQUARTERS- CONTINUOUS**

17

Eshel stops at a traffic light. Norman is close behind him.

18 **EXT. CHOCOLATIER ON MADISON AVE. - DAY**

18

Eshel has entered a gourmet chocolate store.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

Norman carefully peeks into the store window to see Eshel casually sampling chocolate.

Norman considers going inside, but there is something intimate in the way Eshel is savoring the chocolate that Norman knows would embarrass Eshel if interrupted.

So Norman waits outside as Eshel moves over to the cashier with a bag of MILK CHOCOLATE COVERED CASHEWS.

Norman quickly ducks out of Eshel's eye-line

19 **INT. MEN'S CLOTHING BOUTIQUE, NYC - DAY**

19

From inside the shop and its exquisitely designed display window, we see out toward Madison Ave.

Different Upper East Side types cross the window.

Then Eshel stops by the window. He looks inside at a pair of BEAUTIFUL CALFSKIN SHOES set on a pedestal. The shoes are the centerpiece of the window display.

He is munching out of a his BAG OF CHOCOLATES.

Then we see NORMAN walk by the shop.

Norman looks at Eshel for a moment, making believe he is recognizing him for the first time.

Eshel turns around. Norman introduces himself. They shake hands. They talk for a bit. They are referring to something in the display window.

Norman is laughing. So is Eshel.

They stop laughing and continue conversing about something both of them seem to agree on.

Eshel offers Norman a chocolate from his bag. Norman firmly declines. Then Norman opens the door to the shop and allows Eshel to enter before him. Only now do we hear them, mid conversation:

NORMAN

...I'd be happy to introduce you to him. Let me tell Arthur you are in town. I'm going to his dinner tonight. You can join me.

ESHEL

How do you know Arthur Taub?

NORMAN

My wife used to baby-sit him. Then she ended up working for him, years later. They were very close.
(pulling out his cell phone)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Let me tell him you're here, I'm sure he would be happy if you came tonight.

Eshel examines Norman's face. His clothing. His hair. There is something about his appearance that makes Eshel want to think this over.

ESHEL

Hold on a second. Put the phone back...

Norman puts the phone back in his pocket. THE SALES PERSON, who has been waiting for an opening in their conversation, greets the two gentlemen.

SALES PERSON

Good Morning. Welcome to Lanvin. My name is Jacques.

ESHEL

We are just looking around for now. Thank you.

JACQUES

I am very happy to assist you today... Come inside.

NORMAN

Mr. Eshel is speaking at a very special event later this week and has a series of meetings with business leaders and diplomats. He would like to try on the shoes in the window.

Jacques puts his hand under his chin and looks at Eshel, taking in the clothing he is currently wearing and his general style.

Eshel humors him by posing with his hands folded under his chest.

JACQUES

May I ask what line of business you are in?

ESHEL

I don't want to ruin my good first impression, but I am a politician.

NORMAN

This is Mr. Micha Eshel. He is the minister of trade and labor in Israel and deputy to the prime minister.

ESHEL

No. I'm the deputy minister of trade and labor.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ESHEL (CONT'D)

My boss, the minister, is a deputy to the prime minister, but there are three other deputies, just to put things in context.

JACQUES

It is an honor to meet you, Sir. I'm sorry, but you looked too young to be... so important.

ESHEL

Thank you for the very flattering lie. You have a future in politics... which is more than I can say for myself. I might be young, but I'm already washed up. I'm just kidding. Very nice to meet you, Jacques.

JACQUES

(sincerely)

You don't look washed up.

ESHEL

Thank you. That's because I'm in New York now. New York makes me feel good. Back home, I look tired.

NORMAN

No you don't. I've seen your appearances on TV. You look great.

ESHEL

That is because I'm very photogenic...

NORMAN

No, you are one of the few Israeli politicians who radiates optimism.

ESHEL

Optimism... The shoes I buy today will last longer than the government I serve in.

NORMAN

Change is good. That's what I was told.

JACQUES

The fashion world relies on change.

ESHEL

And the Middle East relies on - how do you say stagnatzia?

NORMAN

Stagnation.

ESHEL

Stagnation. Once you're in power,
you don't want anything to change.
You can ask my boss about that...

NORMAN

Do you think he'll become prime
minister?

ESHEL

Maor? If he does, It'll be a joke.

NORMAN

What about you? Would you ever
consider running?

ESHEL

Me?

(eating a chocolate)

You know what the problem with
modern leadership is? To be a real
leader, you need to have a firm
ideology, you have to really know
what is right, and never look to
the sides...

(illustrating with his
hand)

Straight. But in order to get
elected, you need to be the
opposite of all that. That's the
tricky part.

NORMAN

Something tells me that you can do
both. I think you would be a great
candidate.

ESHEL

Only magicians can do two things at
the same time...

(to Jacques)

So what do you say?

JACQUES

The event you are attending... It
is in the evening, yes?

ESHEL

Yes. But I think people will be
coming straight from work. I don't
think they're getting dressed up
especially for this.

NORMAN

Of course they are. It's not black
tie, but this is going to be a
classy crowd. It's at the Waldorf
Astoria.

CONTINUED:

Eshel has casually picked up a shoe to see the price. We see it as well: **\$1045!**

NORMAN (CONT'D)
(to Jacques)
The press will be there too...

ESHEL
(returning the shoe)
Forget the shoes. Nobody is going to be looking at my shoes. Maybe, can I see your ties...

He walks over to the tie display.

NORMAN
What size shoe are you? A ten? Eleven? Just try them on. We're already here.

ESHEL
No. I'm not getting shoes now.
(picking up a beautiful tie)

NORMAN
(handing the shoe to Jacques)
We'll try these on for Mr. Eshel.

Jacques walks over to one of the racks, looking for something.

JACQUES
I think I have a better idea. May I take some measurements, Mr. Eshel?

ESHEL
No. Really, I don't want to take up your time. Thank you. How much is this tie?

Norman moves in closer to Eshel, taking the tie from his hand.

NORMAN
Let's see what he comes up with. Don't say no before you try it on.
(reassuring him with eye contact)
Don't worry. Trust me. Enjoy it. Let him do his job.

JACQUES
A young minister should not feel washed up. Excuse me for saying. Please... I can help with this. Let me try something.

Eshel thinks about this for a brief moment, then playfully submits himself to Jacques' tape measure.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

Norman, in the meantime, sneaks a peek at the price tag on the tie: **\$195!!**

20 **INT. MEN'S CLOTHING BOUTIQUE, NYC - DAY - LATER**

20

Eshel is now standing with his back to a set of THREE MIRRORS. He is dressed in a new elegant suit, shirt and tie.

He looks, and more importantly - FEELS amazing. It is not too flashy, it does not call too much attention to itself, but it does give him a uniqueness that Eshel can feel even without seeing himself.

Norman is reflected in all 3 mirrors, smiling.

Jacques is kneeling by Eshel's feet, fixing his cuff.

ESHEL

(to Norman)

So you said your wife works for Arthur Taub?

NORMAN

Used to work for him, yes. She passed away.

ESHEL

I'm sorry.

NORMAN

This was years ago. But she was very close to Arthur and I would be more than happy if you joined me tonight. He is someone you should meet...

ESHEL

I've been hearing his name from a few different people recently. He's young, right? What's he like?

NORMAN

(expertly)

There are two kinds of moguls. One kind is like a big ocean-liner ship, they make a lot of waves, and noise, everybody can see them from miles away... Like Jo Wilf. I think Minister Maor is in his close circle of friends.

Eshel takes note of that last point.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

And then there is Arthur, who is more like a nuclear submarine. Quiet. Fast. Young. And extremely sophisticated.

(CONTINUED)

ESHTEL
Interesting...

NORMAN
He's an interesting fellow. He likes to surround himself with consultants who are in influential political positions but with an eye on the future. He has good instincts about these things. And he is very good about compensating his consultants. You'd enjoy meeting him.

Eshel takes this in.

ESHTEL
Maybe I'll have my office contact him. We'll see... I'm not a private person, you know... Not yet, anyway.

NORMAN
Of course. But if you need my help reaching him, I'm happy to do it. Even if it is just to plant a seed...

ESHTEL
Thank you.

NORMAN
Where are you staying while you are here? How can I reach you?

We sense Eshel doesn't want to answer that question. He looks over at Norman, again trying to evaluate him.

Jacques at this point has helped him slip on a pair of surprisingly simple looking shoes with a metallic brown tone to them and ordinary laces.

ESHTEL
Can I look at myself yet?

JACQUES
Please, Mr. Eshel, you can turn around now.

Eshel turns around to look at himself. He is speechless.

The 3 mirrors create a triptych with the reflections of Eshel and Norman in his background.

Eshel, looking carefully at his reflected image, tries a facial expression that is contemplative and serious. Then he fills his lungs with air, creating a more authoritative impression.

Norman and Jacques are watching Eshel transform into what he always imagined he could be.

(CONTINUED)

But then Eshel looks down at the price tag on the suit jacket. We see it as well: **\$6750!!**

Then at the shirt price tag: **\$635!!**

Eshel takes off the jacket as if it were on fire and hands it to the surprised Jacques.

He then takes off the shoes and pulls off his pants.

ESHEL

Please, take all this away from me before I get used to it. You are right, it does make me feel fabulous, but there is one rule every Israeli politician learns in the beginning of his career: you cannot wear a suit that costs more than an ordinary man's car. Israelis don't want to see their representatives enjoying themselves. That is a fact. I'm sorry for wasting your time.

NORMAN

But what if you didn't know how much it costs?

ESHEL

I do. It is too late.

NORMAN

(to Jacques)

Could Mr. Eshel perhaps *borrow* the suit for his event?

JACQUES

I can ask. We do that occasionally with celebrities and red carpets.

ESHEL

No! I'm not borrowing it. I don't want to feel like Cinderella for one night. I'm not a model, I'm a member of parliament.

NORMAN

Then keep the shoes.

ESHEL

(handing the shoes to Jacques)

No. Enough... I don't want them.

Norman takes the shoes from Jacques.

NORMAN

Please. Let me buy you these shoes. It would be my privilege to buy them for you. If it makes an Israeli leader feel good, that is the least I can do.

ESHTEL

No. Thank you. But no. I can't.

NORMAN

(kneeling by Eshel with
the shoes)

Would you at least put them on one
more time. Go ahead. Just put your
feet inside, before you say no.

Eshel looks at Jacques, then at Norman, and finally slips his feet back into the shoes. Eshel is now in his shirt, tie, underwear, socks and - metallic brown dress shoes. He loves these shoes! Norman pulls out his CREDIT CARD and gives it to Jacques.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

We're taking them. I don't want you walking out of here empty handed...

ESHTEL

(intercepting the card)

I can't let you pay. If I take the shoes, I have to pay for them.

NORMAN

It's an expense for me. I write it off. Don't argue... I want to do it.

ESHTEL

The truth is, I can't put that kind of expense on my credit card.

NORMAN

You don't have to. I got it.

Norman pushes Eshel's hand away, nods to Jacques, who takes a moment to confirm the transaction before he steps into a side room with the credit card.

ESHTEL

Yeah? You sure?

NORMAN

Yes. Positive. Don't worry. I'm happy to do it.

Eshel is looking down at Norman's worn-out \$40 shoes.

ESHTEL

What about you? Why don't you buy a pair for yourself? They really are magical shoes...

NORMAN

Me? No. I need special orthopedic shoes, I have a very wide foot. Don't ask. I've got problematic feet...

(CONTINUED)

Jacques returns with the card and pen on a tray together with the receipt.

Norman blushes with surprise when he looks at the receipt before he signs it. We see the amount: **\$1137** (including tax)

Norman picks up the pen to sign, but right before he does, he stops to look at Eshel who is putting on his old cloths.

ESHEL
Is everything okay?

Norman signs the receipt. Places the pen down with a dramatic effect.

NORMAN
Everything is perfect! Enjoy!

JACQUES
Would you like to wear them out, Mr. Eshel, or should I put them in a box for you.

ESHEL
Please put them in a box. Thank you. I'll save them for the right occasion.

He hands the shoes to Norman as if Norman were his assistant. Norman hands the shoes over to Jacques to wrap in a box.

ESHEL (CONT'D)
Jesus. I just realized I'm terribly late. I must run now. Thank you very much.
(then to Norman)
I don't know what to say. Thank you for this. I'm glad I bumped into you!

NORMAN
My pleasure.

ESHEL
(joking)
I should have taken the tie too...

NORMAN
Next time...

ESHEL
Next time.
(then...)
Here, take the chocolates. They're delicious.

NORMAN
I have severe nut allergies. One wrong bite and I can drop dead.

ESHEL
(pulling the bag away)
Oh. Sorry. Specifically cashews?

NORMAN
No. Peanuts. But this is the one
area I don't take any risks. Thank
you for offering.

ESHEL
(holding up a chocolate)
This can really kill you? What
happens if you take a bite?

NORMAN
If it has even the smallest trace
of a peanut, my body mistakes it
for a dangerous substance and
immediately shuts itself down. My
skin reacts. My eyes tear. My nose
starts running, and my throat
swells so that I can't breathe.

Norman pulls out an EPIPEN injector from his pocket.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
If I don't inject myself with one
of these, I can be dead in less
than fifteen minutes.

Eshel is impressed by this description.

He pops the chocolate he was holding into his mouth and
carefully places the bag of chocolates on the counter next to
Jacques, away from Norman.

Jacques nods with gratitude.

Eshel walks toward the exit of the fitting room.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
What about Arthur? Would you like
to meet him? Can I tell him you'll
be coming with me tonight?

Eshel thinks about this for a moment. Finally--

ESHEL
Sure. Why not. It would be great to
meet him. I just need to check my
schedule. I'm staying at the
Warwick. Leave a message for me
there with the details.
Thank you, Norman...

NORMAN
Norman Oppenheimer.

Eshel walks back in, hands Norman his BUSINESS CARD, and taps
him on his shoulder in a friendly way.

ESHTEL

Here. Take this. It has my private number in back. No matter what, when you are in Israel, Norman Oppenheimer, if you ever need anything, feel free to call...

Norman pulls out his card holder and takes out his own business card and hands it to Eshel.

NORMAN

And this is me. When you are in New York, if there is anything I can help with, anything at all, please let me know. And I'll call you later.

ESHTEL

(reading off Norman's card)

Oppenheimer Strategies...

Eshel puts the card inside the shoe box.

On his way out with his shopping bag, he grabs a few final chocolates from the bag he left on the counter.

Norman and Jacques watch him as he blends into Madison Ave.

Norman looks down at the card in his hand. We see it has the official symbol of the state of Israel.

It reads: "MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY, TRADE AND LABOR. MICHA ESHTEL, DEPUTY MINISTER". And on the other side, handwritten, Eshel's PRIVATE CELL PHONE NUMBER.

EXT. MADISON AVE - EVENING

Norman is walking and talking on the phone.

NORMAN

...I understand it is a sit-down dinner. I don't need a seat. Just one seat for Mr. Eshel. I'll stand. I have to be somewhere anyway.

Norman stops walking. Distressed.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Please, don't give me a final answer until you speak with Arthur.--
- Micha Eshel. -- E. S. H. E. L.
Tell him he is the guy in charge of regulating the energy industry...--
My name? Norman Oppenheimer.-- Mr. Eshel is a close friend of mine. --
Micha is in town for a few days and he told me he would really love to meet Arthur... --Just please ask Arthur.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

NORMAN (CONT'D)

And if there are two seats, that is obviously better...--One seat is enough. More than enough. See what you can do. Thank you. Call me back...-- Thank you.

Norman hangs up, pulls out Eshel's business card and dials.

22 **INT. ESHEL'S HOTEL SUITE BATHROOM - SAME TIME**

22

ESHEL'S PHONE RINGS just as he enters his suite. He looks at the number on the screen, places the phone on a table by the door and heads toward the luxurious tub in the bathroom.

We stay on the phone while it continues to ring and Eshel gets the water running in the tub.

23 **EXT. ON NORMAN, MADISON AVE. - SAME TIME**

23

Norman gives up, dials another number. After a moment.

NORMAN

Yes. Hi. Can you connect me to Mr. Eshel's room... --So can I leave him a message?

24 **INT. ESHEL'S HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT - LATER**

24

Eshel, in a robe, AND WEARING HIS NEW SHOES, is speaking on the phone. With:

25 **INT. BEDROOM. JERUSALEM APARTMENT - NIGHT - ISRAEL**

25

It is seven hours ahead and DUBY (60s), Eshel's lawyer, a small man with intense eyes and a no-nonsense demeanor, is in bed, picking up a pen and note-pad from his night-table. THEY SPEAK HEBREW.

DUBY

(as he writes down the name Norman Oppenheimer)
Did he say what he does?

ESHEL

He's a businessman. He has some kind of investment fund. Not sure I understood exactly... A warm Jew.

Duby is quietly stepping out of his bedroom so not to wake his wife, taking the pad with him.

DUBY

You want to meet Arthur Taub, but not through this guy Norman.

(CONTINUED)

ESHTEL

I have nothing better to do tonight, why not join him?

DUBY

You can't walk in there with someone you just met and know nothing about. These things are important. If you want to meet Arthur, let me set up a proper meeting.

ESHTEL

Are you sure? It seems harmless...

Duby by now is by his laptop, searching for NORMAN OPPENHEIMER. Random faces come up, but none of them are Norman. The further down he scrolls, the more pictures of ROBERT OPPENHEIMER and images of ATOMIC EXPLOSIONS fill the screen.

DUBY

I'm sure. One hundred percent sure.

Eshel has walked out onto the terrace of the suite.

ESHTEL

I hear Taub is like some kind of - nuclear submarine...

DUBY

Listen to me. We don't even know what this event is all about... I don't want you walking into an uncomfortable situation. Go see a movie. Go have a good meal. Should I reserve a table for you at a nice place?

ESHTEL

I'll find something to do. Forget it. Any press on my visit here so far?

Duby is now looking at a NEWS WEBSITE on his computer screen with a picture of RON MAOR in a photo-opp in NY with important U.S. officials.

DUBY

No. Nothing special. It's better this way...

ESHTEL

It's crazy to see how they suck up everything Maor says. I'm telling you, he is a dangerous man. He literally believes his own bullshit... As if he is running the entire world.

Duby is sensing the poison spreading in Eshel's veins and knows he needs to change the subject.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

DUBY
(searching the web for
entertainment options)
Do you want to see a show tonight?
What do you feel like doing?

ESHEL
...I don't understand how people
take him seriously? Can't they see
he is as dumb as a shoe?

DUBY
I'm getting you tickets for a show!

ESHEL
No show. I'm not in the mood for a
show. I'll go get something to eat.
Don't worry about me...

DUBY
Okay. Put it on your hotel bill.
They're paying for it. And do me a
favor - stay away from the
Normans. I'm serious.

Duby disappears, we stay on Eshel.

He sits down on the sofa in his suite. He is restless.

His phone RINGS. He realizes it is Norman. He is tempted to
answer, but as per Duby's instructions - he doesn't.

Instead, he picks up the remote control and turns on the TV
as the phone continues to RING.

26 **INT./EXT. UPPER EAST SIDE TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT - SAME TIME** 26

Norman hangs up his phone.

He is waiting by the entrance as INVITEES pass him on their
way into a grand Upper East Side townhouse.

He steps out to the street corner, but no sign of Eshel.

He takes out his phone again. We see the screen. He is
calling - "Eshel Private Cell." It rings and rings.

27 **INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT** 27

Eshel is sitting alone in a booth in a very expensive gourmet
restaurant, sipping WINE and enjoying a beautifully displayed
dish of oysters. His phone is BUZZING. He ignores it.

28 **INT. UPPER EAST SIDE TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT** 28

Norman has now blended into the mingling guests.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

We see ARTHUR TAUB (45), the nuclear submarine. He is greeting his guests.

Arthur notices Norman from the corner of his eye.

Norman casually picks up a hors d'oeuvre from a passing waiter, while he nods his head toward Arthur.

29 INT. TOWNHOUSE, DINING AREA - NIGHT

29

Norman has walked up to the second level of the house.

He examines the hors d'oeuvre in his hand - it looks like a stuffed fig with an unidentified nut topping - Norman smells it.

Knowing he can't eat it, he places it on a mantel behind a decorative statue.

Then he peeks through the large doors leading into the formal dining room. From Norman's POV we see a long, fancy dinner table with approximately 20 settings. Next to each setting there is a name card.

Norman walks in, going over the name cards until he locates the card that says MICAH ESHEL. It is a proud moment for him - to have literally secured (by proxy) a seat at the table.

He pulls out his phone and dials again. "Eshel private cell."

He takes a deep, troubled breath as he realizes that Eshel is not picking up.

30 INT. TOWNHOUSE. DINING AREA - LATER

30

The guests are now entering the dining area, finding their seats around the table.

Norman is already sitting comfortably by the table, on the seat marked for Micha Eshel.

He smiles nonchalantly at the guests as they take their seats around him.

Arthur, who is talking to a few people on the other side of the room, notices Norman sitting by the table.

He whispers something into the ear of A WOMAN standing next to him. She is Arthur's assistant.

The smiling assistant approaches Norman. She leans down so that she is very close to his ear.

ARTHUR'S ASSISTANT
(very quietly)
Mr. Taub would like to speak with
you. Do you mind joining me?

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

NORMAN
Of course. Thank you.
(to the couple sitting
next to him)
Excuse me...

Norman and Arthur's (smiling) assistant step out and disappear into a corridor.

31 OMITTED

31

32 **INT. INDOOR BASKETBALL COURT, TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS**

The assistant leaves Norman waiting in this indoor basketball court which apparently serves as Arthur's kids own all purpose playroom. Norman looks around, taking in the extravagant setting. He has his business card ready in his hand. Arthur enters.

ARTHUR
Mr. Oppenheimer?

NORMAN
Norman. We met at the Stern auction. My wife is friendly with Lili. By the way, I can't thank you enough for the last minute invitation for Eshel.

ARTHUR
Where is he? Mr. Eshel.

NORMAN
He's on his way. I just spoke to him. He apologizes. He was held up in a meeting at the U.N., But he is on this way...

ARTHUR
You just spoke to him now?

NORMAN
Yes. A few minutes ago.

Arthur is evaluating Norman. He seems amused, rather than angry.

ARTHUR
How do you know Mr. Eshel?

NORMAN
I've been helping him out with some of his American alliances. There are some very interesting ideas he is trying to promote... For instance, I'm sure you've heard of the tax money Israel is withholding now...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN (CONT'D)

He has this genius idea for a third party to buy those tax receivables...

ARTHUR

(cutting him off)

And, just so that I understand, Mr. Eshel asked you to ask me if he can come tonight?

NORMAN

I told him about some of the work you've been doing with the cancer research fund in Israel and other initiatives you support and he was very excited to meet you... yes.

ARTHUR

You realize that this is an intimate dinner for a group of people who get together for a very specific purpose, right?... And that this is my house. My private home...

NORMAN

It is a beautiful home...

ARTHUR

You can't just walk in and sit at my table. I was happy to include Mr. Eshel, even though I found it a bit odd that he would invite himself to a dinner through someone I don't actually know, But if he is not here, the invitation is not up for grabs. You understand that, right?

As they are speaking, Norman notices Arthur's assistant returning with Norman's COAT and HAT over her arm.

NORMAN

He should be here any moment...

ARTHUR

Well then why don't you wait for him outside and when he arrives I promise you we will make him feel very comfortable.

NORMAN

You want me to wait outside?

ARTHUR

Please.

NORMAN

Okay. That's fine. I'm sure he will be here any minute. Thank you, Arthur.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

Arthur is not sure what to make of Norman. He gives him one last look before he turns around and leaves.

Once alone with Norman, Arthur's assistant's smile disappears. She opens a service door leading to the back yard.

Norman takes his coat and hat, thanks the assistant with a head gesture, then leaves.

33 **EXT. UPPER EAST SIDE TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT**

33

Norman, deflated, is sitting on a bench opposite the townhouse.

He is emptying the last candy out of his box of Mike and Ikes, chewing on them obsessively, and scratching his collar bone.

From his POV, through the large windows of the townhouse, we see Arthur and his guests enjoying their privileged dinner.

Norman rips apart the candy box to make sure it is really, empty, then gets up and walks away into the dark park.

34 **EXT. A SYNAGOGUE ON THE UPPER WEST SIDE - NIGHT - LATER**

34

This is an old Upper West Side building.

Norman comes walking down the block. He stops by the synagogue and presses his face against the glass door.

He tries the door. It is opened.

35 **INT. SYNAGOGUE - CONTINUOUS**

35

We hear a CHOIR and a CANTOR echoing in the foyer. Norman steps into the main sanctuary, following the music.

36 **INT. SYNAGOGUE - MAIN SANCTUARY - CONTINUOUS**

36

A CANTOR and his CHOIR are rehearsing a cantorial piece in this modest in size, but beautiful old New York synagogue.

The cantor acknowledges Norman with a slight head-nod, as he continues the rehearsal.

Norman steps out and enters a small kitchenette off the main sanctuary.

37 **INT. KITCHENETTE - CONTINUOUS**

37

Norman, hungry, finds a box of Ritz crackers on the counter and a bottle of ginger ale.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He takes a fist-full of crackers and pours himself a paper cup full of ginger ale. He opens the refrigerator and pulls out a JAR OF PICKLED HERRING.

Just as he is about to place a piece of herring on a cracker, he hears rapid footsteps descending down a staircase. Norman quickly returns the cracker box and the jar to where they were.

RABBI BLUMENTHAL, a 50 year-old beardless rabbi, emerges from the stairwell, noticing Norman on his way out. He has the energy of someone on speed.

RABBI BLUMENTHAL

Norman Oppenheimer! If you came to hear my class, you're a little late...

NORMAN

If I had the time... If I only had the time.

RABBI BLUMENTHAL

You're busy. That's good. Someone has to make sure the world out there is still spinning... What's new? Who's winning? Who's losing? Tell me something exciting.

NORMAN

I just got back from a very special evening. Fascinating people...
(casually)
At Arthur Taub's house.

RABBI BLUMENTHAL

You were in Arthur Taub's house?

NORMAN

I brought Micha Eshel with me. I should introduce you to him. You know who he is, right?

RABBI BLUMENTHAL

Say the name again...

NORMAN

Micha Eshel. He's in the Israeli parliament. Young. Charismatic. Sharp. Very sharp. I'm helping him out a bit... showing him the ropes. I'm going to help him raise some money.

We sense Rabbi Blumenthal is skeptical of Norman's name-dropping, but he plays along so not to offend him.

RABBI BLUMENTHAL

Good for you. He is a lucky man to have you on his side.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

NORMAN
I'm the lucky one. Believe me, this
guy - he's the real thing. He's an
incredible human being.

RABBI BLUMENTHAL
Maybe bring him to us as a guest
lecturer. If you say he's good...

NORMAN
Next time he is here. We'll make an
evening out of it...

RABBI BLUMENTHAL
Sounds like a plan, Norman.

Rabbi Blumenthal looks at Norman. He doesn't believe a word
he just heard, but going along with it is easier than
confronting Norman.

RABBI BLUMENTHAL (CONT'D)
I'm going to head home. You
staying?

NORMAN
(referring to the cantor
in the background)
It relaxes me. I'll listen for a
bit.

Rabbi Blumenthal nods his head and leaves Norman alone in the
kitchenette.

Norman takes a handful of crackers before he exits--

38 **INT. MAIN SANCTUARY - NIGHT**

38

Norman quietly sits down on one of the benches and listens to
THE CHOIR AND CANTOR REHEARSE.

The entire wall in front of him is covered with MEMORIAL
PLAQUES. Hundreds of names engraved in bronze sheets on the
wall.

Norman pulls out his phone and looks down at the screen,
scrolling down his contact list, waiting, hoping, his phone
will ring. But it doesn't.

He looks up. One name plaque in particular catches Norman's
attention. We close in on it: HENRY KAVISH

39 **INT. ESHEL'S HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT**

39

WITH THE CANTORIAL HARMONY STILL UNDER THE SCENE.

Eshel is alone in his hotel room. He is drunk after a whole
bottle of wine all to himself.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

39

He collapses onto his bed and sees the SHOEBOX from Lanvin.

He opens the box. Pulls out a SHOE. He stares at it with admiration. He notices Norman's business card.

40 **EXT. OUTSIDE THE SYNAGOGUE - NIGHT - SAME TIME**

40

Norman's phone RINGS.

He looks at the screen, his face lights up: "Eshel Private Cell."

Norman had just stepped out of the synagogue, but when he tries to reenter, the doors are now locked.

Before Norman answers the call, he walks around the building into a narrow service alley where there are decorative windows into the main sanctuary and rows of garbage cans.

41 **EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS**

41

Norman finds a spot, takes a deep breath--

NORMAN
Hello Sir.

42 **INT./EXT. ALLEY - SHARED WITH - ESHEL'S HOTEL SUITE**

42

The two men are now SUPERIMPOSED on the screen: Eshel, lying on his back, holding the shoe up in front of his face, Norman in the alley, by the garbage cans.

The CHOIR CAN STILL BE HEARD. It annotates the scene.

ESHEL
Is it too late to call?

NORMAN
No. Not at all. I just got back from Arthur's dinner.

ESHEL
I'm sorry I couldn't make it. It was a crazy day. I'm really sorry.

NORMAN
That's okay. No need to apologize. We'll find another opportunity. I told Arthur all about you...

ESHEL
I feel terrible. Do you forgive me?

Norman pauses on this. As if it is the first time in his life anyone asked him that question.

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN
Please, don't give it another
thought.

ESHEL
Yeah? You sure?

NORMAN
Positive.

ESHEL
I want you to know how much I
appreciate what you did for me
today. I really do. It was... nice.

NORMAN
I'm glad.

ESHEL
Me too. Thank you, Norman.

NORMAN
No, thank you.

Eshel's head drops back, he is about to pass out.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
Mr. Eshel?

ESHEL
How do you say *galgal anak* in
English? The big wheel in the
amusement park. Like in London...

NORMAN
A Ferris wheel?

ESHEL
Yes. A Ferris wheel. Sometimes you
are up and sometimes you are down.
I just wanted to say that to you.

NORMAN
Yes. I know what you mean...

ESHEL
I've tasted it on my tongue. Being
on top of everything. Once you
taste it, you can't settle for
anything less. Do you know that,
Norman? Do you understand what I am
saying?

Norman is confused by Eshel's slurred speech, but he responds
with his utmost sincerity.

NORMAN
I do.

ESHEL
I do too. I do too...

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

Eshel passes out.

The CHOIR FADES OUT.

NORMAN
Mr. Eshel?

Norman stays on the line, listening to Eshel's heavy breathing.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE: **THREE YEARS LATER**

43 **OVER THE BLACK SCREEN WE HEAR:**

43

ANNOUNCER
It is my great honor to welcome the
prime minister of the state of
Israel-- Micha Eshel...

A ROAR OF APPLAUSE AND ECSTATIC CHEERING, takes us into -

44 **INT. WASHINGTON CONVENTION CENTER - NIGHT**

44

This is a ballroom the size of a football field.

THOUSANDS OF MEN AND WOMAN are on their feet, applauding and cheering.

We see the stage. It is the annual AIPAC convention in Washington.

A single, official speaking podium is set in the center of the vast, somewhat futuristically designed stage.

A MUSICAL INTRODUCTION (with pathos at the level of the Star Wars theme) is playing on the PA, accompanying the entrance of Micha Eshel, waving, smiling, overwhelmed by this IMPERIAL welcoming.

ESHEL
Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
Thank you very much. Thank you.
Thank you. Thank you Michael. Thank
you. Thank you all... Thank you.
Thank you...

But the applause won't stop. Eshel absorbs it in. Allowing the love to flow.

Our camera closes in on his unavoidable smirk, then slowly moves down his body and stops on his - METALLIC BROWN SHOES.

Way, way back, far from the stage, Norman Oppenheimer is in the audience, applauding with the masses, his name tag dangling around his neck.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

He is standing so far away from the stage, Eshel is too small for Norman to see his face.

So Norman has his head directed at one of the large screens in the ballroom, projecting Eshel's exuberant face.

Norman is in tears. Tears of genuine excitement.

45 INT. HALL IN CONVENTION CENTER - LATER

45

A long line of MEN and WOMEN has formed around a highly guarded reception area where Eshel and other VIPs are shaking hands and greeting each other.

Norman is looking at Eshel from a distance. From his POV we see Duby, Eshel's lawyer who is now his chief of staff.

And HANNA (38) curly hair, nice smile and energetic eyes.

They are standing behind Eshel with cell phones in their hands, whispering to each other and occasionally into Eshel's ear, monitoring the people who get to approach the new prime minister.

Philip Cohen approaches Norman. He has a plate of PECAN PIE WITH WHIPPED CREAM in his hand. Together they continue to look at Eshel from a distance.

NORMAN

For once I bet on the right horse.
What were the odds? It is a
miracle.

PHILIP

Have you spoken to him yet? I mean
since he won?

NORMAN

We've been exchanging messages.
It's not that simple to reach him
anymore. He's got a lot on his
plate.

PHILIP

And... from now on, I mean, how
does it work? Are you friends? How
close are you? Do you get to visit
him in his office? When he comes to
the States does he invite you to
have breakfast with him at Blair
House?

NORMAN

To tell you the truth, I don't
know. From my side, I want him to
know that I'm here for him if he
needs me.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

Philip looks at Norman, trying to evaluate how sincere he is. Norman appears to be not only sincere - but truly moved by the magnitude of this event.

PHILIP

Can you introduce me to him?

Norman looks at the long line of people waiting for their turn with Eshel.

NORMAN

Of course! But let's wait for the right moment. I don't want to push myself on him.

PHILIP

If you don't go up to him, he won't know you're here.

Norman is hesitant.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

Look at him. He is sealed off, very few people have access to him now that he is King. For all you know he may never return your calls, or worse - he may never even receive your messages...

NORMAN

Nonsense. Micha is a friend.

PHILIP

Micha? There is no more Micha. There is prime minister Eshel, and he has millions of *friends*. You need to get on that line.

Norman knows Philip is right.

46

INT. HALL IN CONVENTION CENTER - LATER

46

With AT LEAST TWENTY PEOPLE ahead of them, Norman and Philip are standing on line to meet Eshel.

From Norman's POV we hear bits and pieces of the conversation around Eshel and see visual fragments of these very quick and awkward encounters.

We jump cut from one encounter to the next, emphasizing the repetitiveness.

One of the people introduced is--

DUBY

Jo Wilf, needs no introduction.

ESHEL

Mr. Wilf! It is good to finally meet you.

(CONTINUED)

Jo Wilf (70), the ocean-liner, receives a warm hand shake from Eshel but then he is ushered away just like the rest.

Norman follows him as he is pushed out of the inner circle, noticing how protective Duby is of Eshel's space.

As Norman and Philip move up in line, we also get a sense for how this works: Hanna spots the person next in line, together with another AIDE she verifies their identity, then she whispers the info into Duby's ear.

Hanna is the friendly one. Duby is protective and suspicious.

We close in on Norman. He is only 4 or 5 people away from meeting Eshel and he is suddenly very nervous about what might happen.

DUBY (O.S.)
Pastor Kermit Little, founder of
Christians Assembly for Israel.

ESHEL (O.S.)
Pastor. I'm honored you are here.
We'll be seeing each other tomorrow
night, right?

Norman catches Hanna's glance.

She smiles at him but it doesn't seem like she has any idea who he is.

She looks down at her lists. Turns a few pages. Nothing.

Duby's suspicious, intimidating eyes also fall on Norman for a brief second.

Norman fixes his NAME TAG so that it is in clear view.

Philip looks over at Norman. Norman is doing his best to project ease. But Philip senses his distress.

PHILIP
Everything okay?

NORMAN
Yes. Fine. I might be reacting to
something in the room. But I'm
okay...

The aide standing next to Hanna is going through her lists as well, finally finding what she was looking for.

Norman sees her whisper something into Hanna's ear, who whispers something into Duby's ear, who looks up directly at Norman.

On the sound-track - background ambiance disappears.

Norman is as helpless and pale as a condemned man about to hear his verdict. Then he hears--

(CONTINUED)

DUBY
Norman Oppenheimer, from New
York...

Eshel turns to face Norman.

A beat.

There is definite favorable recognition. Eshel's face breaks into a huge and warm smile.

Sound-track back to normal.

ESHEL
Norman!! My friend! Where have you
been? I've been trying to reach
you...

Norman finally can breathe again, allowing Eshel to pull him in for a warm and meaningful embrace.

Secret service agents, aides, photographers, all seem to close in on Norman, but not in a threatening way - they are all smiling at him.

Including Jo Wilf, who is watching Norman with a curious look on his face.

All but Duby - who is not smiling and still seems very suspicious of Norman.

ESHEL (CONT'D)
(to Duby and Hanna)
You know Norman, right?

They all shake hands.

ESHEL (CONT'D)
Naomi. Come meet Norman
Oppenheimer. Norman, this is my
wife Naomi.

They shake hands.

ESHEL (CONT'D)
Norman is going to be my special
honorary ambassador to New York
Jewry. My personal, special
advisor.

DUBY
He is?

NORMAN
I am?

ESHEL
Yes. Of course. Look around you.
Look around...

We look around - THE ROOM HAS ENERGY. HUNDREDS OF FACES, NAME-TAGS, BUSINESS CARDS CHANGING HANDS, MEN AND WOMEN IN VIBRANT, LOUD, PRESSING SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS.

ESHTEL (CONT'D)

There are over five hundred organizations represented in this room. It is a tremendous force of nature. Tremendous. Unprecedented in our history. We need to understand how this incredible force unites around the issues that are important for the Jewish people... and the world!

Duby can relax. Another empty, meaningless promise.

But it is enough to impress Philip. And confuse Norman.

FLASH! Their picture is taken against the backdrop of the two flags.

The next people in line are ushered up to Eshel, and Norman is prepared to move aside, but Eshel won't let go of Norman's arm.

DUBY

Congressman Bob Love from Georgia.

ESHTEL

Tom, good to see you. Do you know Norman Oppenheimer?

BOB LOVE

No, I don't. Nice to meet you, Norman. This is my wife, Joyce.

Norman finally shakes off his initial daze.

NORMAN

Nice to meet you, Congressman. Mrs. Love.

Philip leans in, reminding Norman of his presence.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

This is my nephew, Philip Cohen, I think he is the youngest partner at Frankle, Zell, Gould and Rudoff in New York. Right?

PHILIP

Very nice to meet you. One of the youngest...

NORMAN

(pulling him in closer)
I'm sorry, I didn't introduce you... Philip, meet prime minister Eshel.

ESHTEL

Nice to meet you, Philip. DUBY, why do I know that firm?

PHILIP

We represented Toby Tabatchnik, I think he is...

ESHTEL (CONT'D)

Sure, Toby... I know Toby.

NORMAN

Toby is married to a Solomon. Beth. She is Charlie Solomon's daughter...

DUBY

More importantly, Sir Gavin Solomon's granddaughter... I mentioned him to you the other day.

ESHTEL

(to Bob Love)

This Toby, you heard of Smile Bars? The candy bars. Amazing story...

AS THIS CONVERSATION CONTINUES-- Our camera gradually moves up and away from the commotion around Eshel. Norman is in the center of it, shaking hands, laughing, talking, accepting business cards.

From a high angle, it all appears like a busy BEEHIVE. Hundreds of people, buzzing around the room, maneuvering toward the center.

The camera stops high above the room with this intricate, dynamic, human pattern filling our entire frame, illustrating the elaborate network that is being formed in front of our eyes... --FREEZE!

WITHIN THE FREEZE:

On Norman: looking around him - he sees a forest of human encounters frozen in time.

Just as great composers create perfect harmonies in their mind, as world-class chess players can plan 50 moves ahead - so Norman's genius comes into play in this room, at this moment. He sees how it all connects!

Norman examines the different frozen interactions.

--He sees Arthur (nuclear submarine) Taub. He examines his cocky face without any spite or resentment, only a satisfied smile that says - I have arrived!

He also sees Arthur's (still smiling) assistant.

--Then he looks over at BILL KAVISH, standing next to JO WILF. Bill has a strained smile and drops of sweat on his forehead.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

--Then Norman sees Rabbi Blumenthal trying to push his way into a cluster of people, but seems to be blocked out by more aggressive socialites.

--And Philip, right behind Norman, next to Eshel, in his element, mid-conversation, radiant with charisma.

Norman pulls out of his pocket his BUSINESS CARDS HOLDER.

He extracts one and feels it with his fingers like one feels quality silk.

47 INT./EXT. TAXI - NIGHT

47

Norman is in the back seat of a cab, looking out the window with a big smile on his face on his way to Union Station. We see various DC LANDMARKS AND MEMORIALS (Capitol Hill, Washington Monument, Jefferson Memorial, etc) from Norman's POV, INTERCUT WITH:

48 INT. CONVENTION CENTER - NIGHT

48

FLASHES OF PEOPLE INTRODUCING THEMSELVES TO NORMAN EARLIER IN THE EVENING. MEN, WOMEN, OLD AND YOUNG, NAME, ORGANIZATION, AFFILIATION IN STACCATO.

Each introducing the next. All from Norman's POV, realistic and gritty, in dizzying collage of faces, names and accents.

LIOR
(Israeli accent)
My job is basically to help Israeli businesses communicate with the World Bank here in Washington. My wife, Rita...

RITA
(heavy Italian accent)
I'm with the JDC, joint distribution committee. My brother, Rabbi Ariel De La Pelgula.

LIOR
(whispering)
Her brother is the chief rabbi of Rome...

ARIEL DE LA PELGULA
(Italian)
Nice to meet you Mr. Oppenheimer. Meet Luis Pascual.

LIOR
Luis is a Spanish Parliament member. He heads the nuclear energy commission there...

LUIS PASCUAL
(Spanish)
Very pleased to meet you, Mr. Oppenheimer. You know my friend, and lawyer, Philip...

PHILIP

They all come together through Jo Wilf who is very close to Rabbi De La Pelgula's family, and of course through him to the Pope...

PHILIP

Jo, I want you to meet a relative of mine, Norman Oppenheimer. Norman, this is Jo Wilf. Norman is close with Eshel...

AMOS CHERTOFF

It wasn't till my late teens that god personally touched me. It was after the war in 67. Tens of thousands were connecting that historic event to a tremendous release of the spirit... Most of them had a supernatural experience. When the lord touched me. When He manifested himself to me...

JO WILF

How come I don't know you? I know every Oppenheimer in the world...

AGNES

Nice to meet you, Norman.
(handing over his card)
We're the only organization that is doing what James, the lord's brother, said to do in Acts 15. We're restoring David's fallen tabernacle.

AMOS CHERTOFF

(Southern accent)
Amos Chertoff. Messianic Jewish Alliance of America. Very nice to meet you.

JO WILF

How close is close? Close close? Or "close"?

RABBI BLUMENTHAL

(in confidence)
When can we talk? Do you have time next week? We're losing our building, that's what's going on. See what you can do. I'll see you at the board meeting. Yes? Get moving, Norman. Get moving. We're depending on you...

DICK WEAVER

There are a lot of ideas out there that are not biblical, so keeping it sound and grounded in good doctrine is hard. That is one of the reasons we do what we do at MIA. Meet sister Agnes. Agnes, this is Norman, a very close friend of prime minister Eshel.

JO WILF

That's pretty close. Good to know. Eshel, he is still a mystery to me... Tell me something about him...

LIOR
Wait, do you know Bruce
Parish?

BRUCE PARISH
Look, for us at the NJF it is
pretty simple and
straightforward. The rule of
law. Free and fair elections.
Independent judiciary.
Independent control of the
military. Gay rights...

GIL
(Israeli accent)
Israel Inc. It is actually a sales
agency for Israel. The goal is to
encourage positive views of Israel.
We even aim further. We get people
on a plane, get them to Israel.
Introduce them to the most
inspiring people in the world.
Israel as a must see experience.
Have you met Barbara Klein? Startup
State... Let me introduce you...

BARBARA KLEIN
I work with Peter Black at a hedge
fund called Stanely.

AGNES
I've never seen two people
come out of a smorgasbord
with the same plate... But we
all can still sit at the same
table, can't we?

PETER BLACK
Our mission is to make sure
New York doesn't turn into
New Havana...

GIL
It's all about what is in it
for YOU. We give you what you
want and we get what we need.
By not including politics or
religion in our agenda simply
because it doesn't sell...

RABBI BLUMENTHAL
Norman, introduce me to Ariel
De La Pelgula. I saw you
talking to him. Next time the
Pope is in New York, there is
no reason the only rabbi he
meets is Alan Schweitzer!

AMOS CHERTOFF
We cast our demons out of
everything alive or dead.
Under the power of God
descending like that-
(making a sound of
fierce wind)
-you cannot remain still...
It literally blew me out the
door.

AGNES
My brothers and sisters in
the African American group,
the Latino group, the Chinese
group, the Philippino group.
We work together to share the
gospel with the Jewish
people. Do you know Fred
Stokes?

FRED STOKES

All of your family goes to hell, but you get to be saved?! That's not good news! We have to find a way to talk to the Jewish man and woman. Deliver the good news!

BARBARA KLEIN

...attract emerging nations, business leaders, academics, NGOs, entrepreneurs and teach the tools, the special sauce, the magic dust that Israel has to offer in respect to innovation. The brand is creativity.

JO WILF

(pulling Bill Kavish into the frame)
Look, there might be something for us to talk about. Call my office. Bill, make sure we get in touch with Mr. Oppenheimer.

BILL

(looking at the card, then into Norman's eyes)
This is a cell phone. Do you have an office? An address?

ESHEL

(pulling Norman aside)
My son, Davidy, he wants to go to Harvard Business School, he doesn't have the grades, but he has a good instincts, believe me, like his mother. Do you know somebody who can help him with his application? I don't want any special treatment... just a few tips. To understand what they are looking for...

NAOMI

His grades are very good. But he missed some of his exams because he had to go to *miluim*, you know what *miluim* is? Army service. What can you do? We live in a tough neighborhood... but he is an excellent student.

DUBY

Please, don't speak to anyone on behalf of the prime minister. If he asks you for something, it is important that you speak to me or with Hanna first. Okay?

HANNA

(handing over her card)
Feel free to call me. That's what I'm here for. Any time. Don't worry, all his calls go through me, so don't use any of the old numbers. I'm so happy to finally meet you in person...

BRUCE PARISH
(candidly)
If the goal is achieved by speaking privately, we'll speak privately. Not everything has to be public. Is there not a certain humility or restraint the Jewish leaders should exercise when real lives hang in the balance?

BARBARA KLEIN
We're working on a documentary that is fully funded. But only so many people see documentaries. So we are also cooking up a feature film. Apparently there hasn't been a feature film that's been seductive about Israel since Exodus, so we're working on a romantic comedy set in Israel...

RABBI BLUMENTHAL
Without a building, without those four walls a floor and a ceiling, we're like an old wine in a broken bottle. Something physical has to hold us together...

PHILIP
That Rabbi you spoke with, Blumenthal, is he friendly? Do you think he can help me with Nicole's conversion?

BARBARA KLEIN
Start Up State doesn't have an address. That is the point. It's in people's minds. It's abstract.

And together with Barbara Klein, everyone in the room joins in-

EVERYONE
Here, take my card... Call me!

Norman takes it all in. He is drunk, but not from alcohol. He has never felt this safe, or at home, in his life.

The last image in this series of FLASHES from Norman's POV, is a shot of Eshel being escorted out of the room by a dense herd of aides and security.

Eshel turns his head and gives Norman one last look.

There is longing in Norman's eyes as he watches Eshel disappear.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

Back in the cab, The NIGERIAN DRIVER looks back at Norman with a friendly smile.

Norman is going over the tens of BUSINESS CARDS he collected over the evening.

EXT. UNION STATION WASHINGTON DC- NIGHT

Norman's cab stops my the main entrance. Norman gets out of the cab and enters the station.

51

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

51

ALEXANDRA (ALEX) GREEN (30s) is entering the train car still at the platform of Union Station. She takes off her coat as she finds a seat by the aisle.

There is an AIPAC NAME TAG still hanging around her neck under her coat.

Once she sits down, we notice Norman entering the car . He sees her name tag and smiles at her, sitting across the aisle from her.

NORMAN

Norman Oppenheimer. Nice to meet you...
(reading off her name tag)
Alex Green.

ALEX

Nice to meet you too. I guess we can take these off now.

They both remove their name tags. Alex pulls out her iPad, but before she can turn it on--

NORMAN

What brings you to AIPAL?

ALEX

I represent one of the organizations.

NORMAN

Which one? Which organization?

ALEX

I work in the Israeli consulate in New York.

NORMAN

Really? You're Israeli? You don't sound Israeli.

ALEX

I'm not.

NORMAN

Where is your family from?

ALEX

Excuse me?

NORMAN

Where are you from? Where were you born? How did you end up here?

ALEX

I'm from Geneva. Originally.

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN
Really? Geneva! Then you must know
a close friend of mine... Leo
Reiss.

Alex shakes her head, no, she does not know him.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
No? Very famous family, a big
supporter of the Israel museum.
His wife Sophia... No?

Alex shakes her head. Norman senses her coldness, so he lets
go.

As passengers continue to enter the train, walking through
the aisle between them--

NORMAN (CONT'D)
Wait... Green... Any connection to
Julian Green? From Basel...

Alex shakes her head again.

The last PASSENGER has entered the car. He stops right
between them and indicates to Alex that he would like the
seat next to her.

Alex gets up to allow him to get in.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
(moving over in his seat)
You are welcome to sit here... If
you're busy, I won't bother you.
Don't worry...

Alex looks up at the seat situation in the car. The last
travelers are finding their seats, filling up most of the
car. She doesn't really have a civil way to refuse, so she
collects her stuff and sits next to Norman.

ALEX
Thank you.

As she turns on her iPad--

NORMAN
What do you do in the consulate?

ALEX
I'm in the legal department. I'm a
lawyer.

NORMAN
I've had dinner with your boss a
few times. Yuval. The consul
general. Interesting fellow... You
can send him my regards.

Alex nods her head with a blank smile.

51 CONTINUED:

ANNOUNCER
Welcome aboard Amtrak Acela
express. For your safety please
take a moment to review the safety
instructions card in the seat-back
in front of you...

THE TRAIN BEGINS TO MOVE. The announcements continue--

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
At this time the conductor will be
coming by to inspect your tickets.
Please have them ready. If you are
seated in the quiet car, please
refrain from using cell phones and
please speak in subdued tones.
Thank you for choosing Amtrak.

NORMAN
(smiling)
This isn't the quiet car, is it?

52 **INT. BLAIR HOUSE - NIGHT**

52

Eshel, Duby, Hanna, Naomi and other AIDES AND STAFF together
with the regular GROUP OF SECRET SERVICE MEN, enter one of
the large drawing rooms, still swarming with JOURNALISTS,
EMBASSY STAFF AND OTHER GUESTS.

The official/ceremonial part of the day is over and Eshel is
in a playful, jet-lagged mood.

ESHEL
Everybody! Go home. Go to sleep!
Leave me alone! The historical bond
between the United States and
Israel has never been stronger, you
can all relax. At least till
tomorrow morning. Right Duby?

DUBY
(smiling)
The "special relationship" is
intact!

ESHEL
That's right. The "special,
relationship". And...

Eshel lifts his hand as if he is conducting a choir.

ESHEL, DUBY AND EVERYBODY ELSE
The "unwavering commitment to
Israel's security..."

ESHEL
Yafe. The unwavering commitment.
Now, please, leave me alone... Get
some sleep. If I have to shake one
more hand tonight, my fingers will
fall off.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED:

Eshel allows himself to fall into one of the sofas in the room. He loosens his tie and kicks off his SHOES.

With Hanna's encouragement, most of the people exit the room.

But there is one tall, slim MAN in his 60s waiting patiently in the corner of the room who is not leaving. His name is BRUCE SCHWARTZ.

DUBY
(to Eshel)
One more hand to shake, I'm afraid.
You've met Bruce Schwartz before,
haven't you? Special Middle East
Coordinator

Bruce comes over and sits in one of the chairs opposite Eshel.

BRUCE
Just over the phone. Good to
finally meet in person, prime
minister. We don't have to shake
hands...

ESHEL
That is very considerate of you.

They shake hands anyway.

ESHEL (CONT'D)
You're not going to make me put on
my shoes, are you?

BRUCE
No. This is as informal as could
be.

ESHEL
Good. The formal me needs a rest...

DUBY
Bruce would like to go over some
points before tomorrow's meeting
with the president.

Bruce leans in. DUBY and Hanna lean in too, to Bruce's surprise.

BRUCE
It is less about your meeting with
the president and more about the
statements you will deliver
elsewhere in town. As somebody who
occupies a fairly tough job
himself, the president is always
sympathetic to foreign leaders
dealing with complicated internal
politics...

(CONTINUED)

ESHEL
Let me stop you. Excuse me. *Ani lo
tzarich et hahartzaah hazot.*

Duby, on instinct, is about to interfere, but Eshel signals him to remain out of it.

ESHEL (CONT'D)
Please tell the president that I am here to say 'yes' to peace. I'm sorry - "state of peace" as we agreed to call it. I fully accept his vision. I understand it and I believe in it. No internal politics will change my commitment to the Wye document.

Duby, Hanna and Bruce are all surprised by how firm Eshel sounds. Surprised and relieved.

Eshel gets up to grab a handful of CHOCOLATE COVERED NUTS out of a bowl on one of the tables --

ESHEL (CONT'D)
This evening I had to... Duby, how do you say *mas sefataim*?

DUBY
To pay lip service.

ESHEL
I had to pay lip service to a few organizations on a few minor issues, but I promise you it has no substance.

BRUCE
I'm sure the president will...

ESHEL
(cutting Bruce off,
sitting across from him)
You know what I've found out in the last couple of weeks since I was elected? It is very strange, because it is the opposite of what I thought I would feel. Maybe the president can identify with me... For the first time in my professional life, I have no political worries. This is true. I don't care if I'm reelected. Somehow God put me in this job. It is not that I didn't work very hard to get here, I did, but hundreds of other potential leaders worked and campaigned just as hard as I did, and for some reason I'm the one sitting in this chair today. The top spot. I've reached the top of the ladder.

Eshel picks up a SMALL FLAG that was placed on the table, gets up for more chocolate.

ESHEL (CONT'D)

Why me? And not someone else? Who knows. Believe me, I'm as surprised as everyone else. But this is the interesting thing - instead of feeling the burden of that great responsibility, I'm feeling...
Duby, iech omrim goral?

DUBY

Fate.

ESHEL

I feel... Fate, which weighs nothing at all. If God put me here, he must have had a good reason. I'm not free to run away from this job, but to be honest - no single human being can really claim to be big enough for this job either.

Hanna and Duby exchange a glance.

DUBY

(to Bruce)

I would be happy to go over our itinerary with you so that we can discuss the sensitivities of each group...

ESHEL

(to Bruce, cutting Duby)

What is it that really worries the president? Tell me. I want to know. What doesn't he want me to say?

BRUCE

Well, you have been saying different things in different forums. I think we are trying to get a better understanding of the singular message you wish to deliver.

ESHEL

You were there tonight, right? Hanna, how many completely opposing organization leaders came up to me and said - we're behind you. You have our support to stand your ground. How many? 50? 100? Each with a completely different agenda. There is no such thing as a singular message. And anyone who tells you he has a singular message is probably teaching at a university or writing a blog.

BRUCE
I didn't mean it that way, I'm
sorry if...

ESHTEL
(cutting Bruce)
I'll tell you what my singular
message is. I'm going to end this
conflict. How? I'm going to say
'yes' to compromise, to EVERYBODY!
Because the opposite of compromise
is not idealism. The opposite of
compromise is not integrity. The
opposite of compromise is
fanaticism and death. LIFE is
compromise. I not only believe in
that. That is who I am. That is why
I'm here, in this position. If it
works, I will go down in history as
the leader who ended this epic
conflict. If I'm wrong, and my
compromise leads to another bloody
war - I will blame God for giving
me a role I was incapable of
performing.

Eshel's confused monologue, (only a notch below Dr.
Strangelove level) is a result of extreme fatigue and the
high level of adrenaline his body has been releasing all
night. But now he is done. Eshel pops the last chocolate
covered nut into his mouth, picks up his SHOES and walks
out.

Bruce, Duby and Hanna have gone from pleasant surprise in the
beginning of his monologue, to complete shock at the end.

Back to Norman and Alex. The train is in motion. The lights
have been dimmed.

NORMAN
So can I ask you, what kind of
stuff do you deal with?

ALEX
(covering her iPad)
There is what's called a mutual
legal assistance treaty between
Israel and the United States. We
have our hands full...

NORMAN
I can imagine. Like what kind of
things? Commerce agreements?

ALEX
No, that is a different department.
We are an arm of the Israeli
justice ministry in the United
States.

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)
We coordinate criminal investigations, judicial procedure, extradition.

NORMAN
So if an Israeli criminal flees to America, you're in charge of bringing him back?

ALEX
We would be involved in that, yes.

NORMAN
Or if an American criminal tries to hide out in Israel...

ALEX
Yes, that too.

NORMAN
Wow. So do you have any interesting stories for me? Like with all those Russian oligarchs who are wanted all over the world and ask for asylum in Israel. Tell me how that works from the inside...

Alex shakes her head. Her lips are sealed.

ALEX
Sorry.

NORMAN
Do you know Carol Raskin? If I'm not mistaken, she wrote some of these international treaties. She's a good friend of mine. Do you know Carol?

ALEX
Not personally, no, but I know who she is...

NORMAN
I'd be happy to introduce you...

ALEX
That's not necessary. I wouldn't want to bother her. But thank you.

She is a solid brick wall, leaving Norman no entrance point.

Alex looks at her watch. Then at Norman, who has no reading material, and doesn't seem like he plans on sleeping.

She pulls out a pair of EARPHONES from her bag. As she inserts one into her ear - Norman catches a quick glimpse at a SIMPLE GOLD WEDDING BAND on Alex's finger.

NORMAN
Family? Kids?

She pulls out the earphone.

ALEX
I'm sorry. What?

NORMAN
Do you have a family? Kids?

ALEX
A partner.

NORMAN
You're a lesbian??

Alex laughs. Finally.

ALEX
Yes. I am.

NORMAN
Good for you. That's terrific.

ALEX
What is?

NORMAN
I like it when people know what they want. It's a good thing. To be focused. You know, I have a close friend, a fascinating man named rabbi, professor Nathaniel Lewis, he teaches at JTS. He has a daughter who started a Jewish lesbian organization. Abigail Lewis. Do you know her?

Alex shakes her head.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
You should meet her. You'll love her. I can get you two together...

ALEX
That is the third time in five minutes that you offered to introduce me to someone. Why are you trying to get me to meet people? Do I look lonely?

Norman looks at her for a long moment.

NORMAN
What do you mean?

ALEX
Why do you feel that I need these introductions? Have I given you that impression? That I'm looking for connections?

Norman shakes his head.

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to offend you. I just thought it made sense. And maybe it is good for Abigail too, to meet someone at the Israeli consulate. But maybe I'm wrong...

He turns away to face the window.

ALEX

I didn't mean that as criticism. I apologize if it came out that way.

NORMAN

Then what are you saying? I don't understand.

ALEX

Never mind. I appreciate you trying to help connect me, it is just that I don't need connections right now.

NORMAN

So what do you need?

ALEX

What do I *need*??

NORMAN

Yeah. I'm sitting next to you on the train, we were both at the convention together, how can I help you? I'm offering my assistance. I'm a good person to know. Take advantage of that. What do you need? I'll help you get it.

Alex sincerely thinks this over for a moment, but comes up with --

ALEX

I don't *need* anything.

NORMAN

Impossible. Everybody needs something. Even tough lesbian lawyers.

ALEX

I need many things, but not necessarily things you can help with.

NORMAN

Try me.

ALEX

I need the satisfaction of knowing that I'm doing good in the world.

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN
(scratching his ear)
That's a big one.

They both smile.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
Your parents - they're proud of
you?

ALEX
I think so. I hope so...

NORMAN
They should be.

Alex sees that Norman means it and accepts his complement.

ALEX
What about you? Family? Kids?

NORMAN
A daughter, just finished graduate
school. Her mother died when she
was three.

ALEX
Sorry to hear that. You raised your
daughter alone?

NORMAN
I did my best, yes.

ALEX
That must have been difficult.

NORMAN
You know what they say - small
children, small problems...

ALEX
And why were you at the convention?
I noticed you were speaking with
the prime minister. You know him
well?

Norman hesitates for a brief moment before he responds. Then--

NORMAN
Yes. I do. Micah is a close friend.

ALEX
How did you meet him?

NORMAN
I bought him a pair of shoes.

ALEX
You bought him a pair of shoes?

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN
(in a sweet folkie melody)
You never know... You never know...
You never know...

Miraculously, Alex is now completely captivated by Norman.

ALEX
What do you mean you bought him a
pair of shoes?

NORMAN
You never know. A pair of shoes.
The most expensive shoes in all of
New York, but the best investment I
made in my life.

Norman pauses. From here on the scene is shot in extreme close-ups, accentuating every tiny, careful, move they make, like bomb disposal experts picking a path through a minefield.

ALEX
May I ask what you do for a living?

NORMAN
I'm a businessman.

ALEX
What sort of business?

NORMAN
Consulting. Mostly.

ALEX
You work in a consulting firm?

NORMAN
Firm? No. It is basically only me
these days.

ALEX
Who do you consult?

NORMAN
Businesses. Organizations.
Individuals. It varies. Sometimes I
consult other consultants.

Norman smiles. So does Alex.

ALEX
Do you have a specific area of
expertise? Can you explain to me
how your business works? If it is
not too complicated... I'm curious.

Norman examines her face. Maybe there is something she "needs" after all.

57 CONTINUED:

57

He pulls her in for a HUG. It makes Alex laugh. She doesn't reciprocate, but she doesn't resist him either.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
Take care, Alex. Good luck.

She smiles and takes off toward one of the escalators.

As she disappears up the escalator, she waves his business card, indicating that she will be in touch.

Norman, alone on the platform, waves back to her, satisfied.

CUT TO ALEX'S FACE: Once out of Norman's sight, her smile disappears. She places Norman's card in her purse and takes a deep, troubled breath.

58 **INT. PENN STATION, DUNKIN DONUTS - NIGHT**

58

Alex is sitting by a table alone in the only shop that is open at this hour. She is looking at her YELLOW LEGAL PAD on which Norman scribbled the messy diagram with names and arrows, specifying next to each name what he or she "NEEDS" or "CAN GIVE".

Alex is copying down the names to a new sheet of paper.

Then she looks up. From her POV we see:

59 **INT. PENN STATION - NIGHT - SAME TIME**

59

On the other side of the station, entering the closed-off waiting area, Norman is wandering through the empty seats, finally sitting down. He takes off his shoes. He pulls out of his pocket a box of MIKE AND IKES, chewing on them 3 at a time.

Alex is watching him from a distance. She picks up his business card and decides to dial his number.

We see Norman look at his phone and answer the call.

NORMAN
Hello...

ALEX
Hi. It's Alex. From the train...
Just now.

NORMAN
Alex! I'm so glad you called. I'm
just getting into a cab. Should I
pick you up? Where are you?

ALEX
I'm still at Penn Station.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED:

We see Norman look around, wondering if he is caught. He can't see Alex through the glass barriers and across the hall, but Alex is not hiding from him. It feels as if she actually wants him to see her.

NORMAN
On the street?

ALEX
No. I'm still inside.

Norman is silent for a second.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Is everything okay, Norman?

NORMAN
Yes, of course. Everything is perfect. Couldn't be better. This whole evening... it's like I'm floating on a cloud. What about you - are you okay? Why did you call?

Alex looks down at the diagram on her pad. Then--

ALEX
I realized just now that I didn't give you *my* number and I wanted you to have it. You never know...

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE: **FOUR MONTHS LATER**

60 **INT. STAIRWELL**

60

We are looking down from the third floor of a creaky stairwell in Rabbi Blumenthal's synagogue. WE HEAR HEAVY FOOTSTEPS CLIMBING UP THE STEPS. A PHONE RINGS.

NORMAN (O.C.)
(out-of-breath, trying to whisper)
Philip, I'm in a meeting, can I call you back in about twenty minutes? --Yes. I'll call you. Bye -
-Everything is perfect. --
No. Not yet, I need to find the right moment. Trust me, okay? --
Please don't say that. I asked you to trust me. Give me a few more minutes. Bye. --Yes. Bye. Thank you...

61 **INT. STAIRWELL, THIRD FLOOR - CONTINUOUS**

61

Norman gradually ascends, step after heavy step, revealing himself to us.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

61

He doesn't look like everything is perfect. He is fatigued from the walk-up, carrying his coat, scarf, gloves, hat, umbrella and PHONE in his hands.

Norman looks at his phone for a moment, deliberating whether or not to make a call. Finally, he decides to press CALL.

62 INT. HANNA'S OFFICE - EVENING - ISRAEL

62

Hanna is by her desk in the prime minister's office in Jerusalem. Her phone is RINGING, but she is letting it ring.

There is a TREMENDOUS BOUQUET OF ROSES on her desk.

Hanna looks tired and upset, holding her head, looking down at a CARD. We close in on the card. It reads: I'M SO SORRY. PLEASE, PLEASE FORGIVE ME. NORMAN OPPENHEIMER.

63 INT. STAIRWELL, THIRD FLOOR - AT THE SAME TIME

63

With dilated nostrils, Norman inhales and exhales twice before he gives up and hangs up.

Norman closes his eyes, as if to restart his mood.

When he opens his eyes, he has resolved himself for whatever lies ahead. He exits the frame.

64 INT. BANQUET HALL - DAY

64

This is a medium size hall on the third floor of the synagogue.

A group of 9 MEN and 3 WOMEN are convened around a table in the center of this elegant but outdated room, conducting what we will soon find out is a synagogue board meeting. Norman appears at the entrance to this hall.

RABBI BLUMENTHAL

Look who showed up... Our savior
has finally arrived.

NORMAN

Sorry I'm late.

Norman walks in and sees that the table is scattered with little paper plates with different NUTS- almonds, walnuts, pistachios and peanuts.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

(moving a plate of nuts)
But that's no reason to kill me.
Can you get rid of the nuts please?

65 INT. BANQUET HALL - CONTINUOUS

65

The nuts are gone.

While we focus on Norman's face, his breathing, his eyes moving around the room as he sits by this table, we hear Rabbi Blumenthal -

RABBI BLUMENTHAL

The situation is very simple. The National Council has decided to sell the building. They are willing to try their best to keep our lease as part of whatever agreement they sign with the new owners, but as we all understand, they can't guarantee anything. To be practical, we need to raise approximately fourteen million dollars, to save us from the wrecking ball and insure our future here...

We see Rabbi Blumenthal's lips move, but we no longer hear him.

Instead we focus on Norman's agitated face.

This takes us into the following FRENETIC, FAST MOVING sequence recapping the events that lead to this board meeting.

66 INT. JO WILF'S OFFICE - SHARED WITH - INT. STAPLES STORE - 66 DAY

On one side of the frame we see JO WILF, in his GRAND MIDTOWN OFFICE.

On the other side of the frame we see NORMAN in a STAPLES STORE, speaking on his cell phone.

JO WILF

Norman, Philip tells me you can help me.

NORMAN

You will have my best effort, yes.

JO WILF

Here, talk to Bill.

Jo puts the call on SPEAKER - Bill Kavish steps up to the phone.

BILL

Norman, this is Bill. Norman?

NORMAN

Is Jo still there? Can he hear me?

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED:

We see Jo signal to Bill to say no.

BILL
Jo had to step out.
Let me tell you what we need. You
with me?

NORMAN
(disappointed he has to
deal with Bill)
I'm all yours. Go ahead...

BILL
We have a colleague who could use a
friendly introduction at the State
Department...

NORMAN
The state department?

BILL
Yes. You do that for us, open the
door for him at the state
department, get him in a room with
Douglas Gordon - that thing Philip
discussed with Jo - we'll see what
we can do.

Jo Wilf looks over at the GROUP OF PEOPLE in his office with
an expression that says - "it's worth a try".

Norman passes a PEN TESTING PAD. He writes down- DOUGLAS
GORDON, and takes the page with him.

Then - Jo Wilf's side of the frame is replaced with the
interior of a BULLET PROOF LIMOUSINE in Israel.

67 **INT/EXT - LIMO IN ISRAEL - SHARED WITH - INT. STAPLES STORE** 67

Hanna and Duby are in the back seat of a limo that is part of
Eshel's motorcade passing through the streets of Jerusalem.

Norman is still in the Staples store, looking over a variety
of ENVELOPES on display.

NORMAN
Hanna, please, Just give me a
minute with him on the phone. One
minute. Less than a minute. This is
something he wants to hear...

Hanna looks at Duby who is shaking his head decisively -
Absolutely not.

HANNA
I'm really sorry, Norman. The prime
minister is not available to speak
right now.

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN

Then can I speak with Duby? Put
Duby on the phone?

(whispering)

It has to do with a special request
the prime minister asked me to look
in to.

Hanna looks at Duby - Duby is shaking his head - no!

HANNA

I'm afraid Duby is also
unavailable. I'm sorry Norman.
These are busy days for us.
Unfortunately I can't be more
specific, but I'm sure you
understand.

Norman is visibly distressed by this. By now he has walked
over to the OFFICE FURNITURE SECTION. He sits down on one of
the office chairs behind one of the desks on display, as if
this were his natural work area.

NORMAN

I understand. Of course. Alright.
Please let the prime minister know
that I have an answer for him and
if he has a free moment, at any
hour, day or night, it would be
great if we can have a very, very
short phone conversation about a
certain individual on the board of
the dean's advisers at Harvard
business school...

HANNA

(checking with Duby...)

I will, Norman. Thanks for calling.

Duby is signaling with his hand to ask who the "certain
individual" is.

HANNA (CONT'D)

Can you tell me who this person is?

NORMAN

... I'll tell the prime minister
all about him when we speak.

Duby smiles, shaking his head. He knows how Norman functions.

HANNA

Okay, Norman. Thank you...

NORMAN

No - thank you, Hanna! Go back to
doing your important work. I'm
sorry for interrupting... You're
doing a great job and I know the
prime minister appreciates it...
Just don't forget me Hanna, okay?

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED:

67

But Hanna has already hung up.

68 INT. LIMO - AT THE SAME TIME - ISRAEL

68

HANNA

(to Duby, in Hebrew)

What do I do with him? That's the fifth time I've blown him off.

DUBY

Don't say it as if you've done something wrong. That's your job. Keeping the Normans away.

HANNA

Do you know what the prime minister wanted from him? Isn't David applying to Harvard?

DUBY

I don't care.
Norman does not get passed you. No matter what he says.
If he becomes obsessive, you can take a call from him once every few days so that he doesn't get paranoid, and to keep the connection alive, but never, never put him through. Understood? Never.

Hanna accepts this, but she doesn't like it.

DUBY (CONT'D)

Don't worry about Norman. Getting you on the phone is enough for him. More than enough. In his head, he just had a conversion with the prime minister of Israel.

69 INT. STAPLES STORE - DAY

69

Norman is by the cashier, paying for a package of ENVELOPES and a CARTRIDGE OF BLACK PRINTER INK. He is paying with a few crumpled single dollar bills and a handful of quarters, dimes and nickels. Right before he checks out, he places a box of MIKE AND IKES on the counter as well.

70 EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - SHARED WITH - INT. RABBI BLUMENTHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Norman is dialing a new number.

R. Blumenthal has a YOUNG COUPLE sitting in his office. He apologizes to them for having to take the call.

NORMAN

Rabbi! It's Norman.

(CONTINUED)

RABBI BLUMENTHAL
Why don't you answer your phone?
I've been calling all morning.

NORMAN
I'm answering now. Do you want to
hear what I have to say?

RABBI BLUMENTHAL
You spoke to him?? What did he say?

NORMAN
I don't have a final answer yet,
but it looks good. I'll be at the
board meeting with all the details
but let's just say - get ready for
a surprise.

RABBI BLUMENTHAL
What kind of surprise are we
talking about? How many zeros does
this surprise have? Can you tell me
that at least?

NORMAN
(hailing a taxi)
If I tell you, where's the
surprise? It's a considerable
surprise. Believe me. I gotta go,
Rabbi. I'll see you tomorrow...

Blumenthal's study apparently also serves as a CLEANING
SUPPLIES storage place. The Rabbi picks up a WINDOW CLEANING
SPRAY because he needs to wrap his fist round *something*.

RABBI BLUMENTHAL
Norman, you realize how important
this is, right? They are going to
kick us out of here... You need to
give us a firm answer. No games...
Norman!!-- Norman!!

Norman has hung up.

Rabbi Blumenthal faces the sweet couple waiting for him,
doing his best to erase the anxiety on his face.

He is then replaced with Jo Wilf and his team in Wilf's
office. And Norman is now sitting in a bus-stop.

INT./EXT. BUS-STOP - SHARED WITH - INT. WILF'S OFFICE - DAY1

Norman has the box of MIKE AND IKES on the bench next to him.
He is eating 3 at a time.

NORMAN
I have a call with Eshel this
evening, but I brought it up with
his main man, Duby. I think it will
be okay.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED:

NORMAN (CONT'D)

He was very practical about it,
said he would take care of it, he
just needs the exact information.
Can you send me an e-mail with your
colleague's name?

Jo Wilf shakes his head toward Bill Kavish.

BILL

No e-mails, Norman.
His name is Matthias Kone, he is an
official in the treasury department
in the Ivory Coast. Eshel's office
will need to reach out to him.
We're not involved. It has to come
from them. Maybe he can join their
delegation in Davos...

On Norman's face: The Ivory Coast - that doesn't sound good
to him.

Jo Wilf's office is replaced with Hanna and Duby now part of
the prime minister's entourage at an HONORARY DOCTORATE
CEREMONY in an unidentified University.

72 **INT. UNIVERSITY AUDITORIUM - NIGHT - ISRAEL**

72

We enter during a musical interlude. A VERDI ARIA is being
performed on stage.

On Hanna, off stage, surrounded by security guards: her cell
phone is blinking. Her screen reads - "Norman". She shows it
to Duby. Duby smiles, signals with his fist that she needs to
be firm.

OPERA SINGER

Tra la la la la la laaaaa!

73 **INT. BUS-STOP - DAY**

73

Norman hangs up. He rubs his eyes. Shit! (He either says or
thinks to himself) as he empties the box of MIKE AND IKEs
into his palm. He dials a new number.

74 **INT./EXT. PHILIP COHEN'S OFFICE - SHARED WITH - EXT. FIFTH AVE. - DAY** 74

Philip is on the phone with Norman who is exiting an office
building. It is noisy outside and Norman can hardly hear
Philip.

PHILIP

(losing his patience)

...Anyone who applies to Harvard
fills out the same standard form.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED:

PHILIP (CONT'D)
When they see his father's name on the form it will immediately be brought to the dean's attention that the son of the prime minister of Israel is applying for the business school. You don't need me for this.

NORMAN
Hold on a second. I can't hear a word you are saying...

Norman sees the entrance to Bergdorf Goodman across the street. He crosses over.

75 INT./EXT. BERGDORF GOODMAN - SHARED WITH - INT. PHILIP'S OFFICE - DAY 75

First floor - jewelry and handbags.

Norman is already on the escalator leading up to the second floor.

NORMAN
(trying to keep his voice down)
If it were that easy would I be asking you for help? He doesn't have the grades, Philip. He won't get in without serious pressure and your personal intervention.

Philip takes a deep breath. He doesn't like this.

Norman has arrived at the 2nd floor. Women's shoes.

It is beautiful and colorful and glamorous, buzzing with assertive women shopping for shoes.

Norman finds a relatively quiet spot.

Philip and Norman, each in their separate surroundings, are scratching their heads nervously.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
Philip, it's just a call...

PHILIP
How is this connected to the rabbi again, Norman? Remind me... Why am I doing this?

NORMAN
You are doing this because he is the prime minister of Israel and he is asking you for a favor.

(CONTINUED)

PHILIP

No. He is asking YOU for a favor.
Correct me if I'm wrong - you're
getting the credit for this favor.
Not me.

NORMAN

What are you talking about -
credit? What does this have to do
with credit?

PHILIP

I'm going to hang up on you...

NORMAN

We are sharing the credit, Philip.
He knows you are my contact.

PHILIP

Does he?

NORMAN

He will. I'll make sure of it.

PHILIP

Why do I have a feeling he is going
to think Jo Wilf is the magician
who got his son into Harvard.

NORMAN

Why are you giving me a hard time?
Do you want Rabbi Blumenthal to
perform this wedding or not? All
you have to do is pick up the phone
and talk to one of your buddies at
Harvard on behalf of the prime
minister of Israel. Is that really
so difficult for you?

SILENCE. We sense it is extremely difficult for Philip...

PHILIP

I'll make the call. I can't promise
anything though...

NORMAN

Thank you.

PHILIP

Don't belittle what I'm doing. In
the world of Harvard admissions,
this is the biggest no no in the
book. It's like incest. It's taboo.

NORMAN

That's funny, because Rabbi
Blumenthal is going to think the
exact same thing when he finds out
I'm asking him to marry a Cohen and
a convert, who hasn't even
officially converted.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED:

75

Philip's side of the frame is replaced with Hanna, now at a FORMAL RECEPTION FOR A CHINESE DIPLOMATIC DELEGATION meeting with Eshel.

76 INT. BERGDORF GOODMAN - SPLIT WITH - INT. RECEPTION HALL - 76
ISRAEL

Hanna's phone is blinking. It is Norman. Hanna takes a deep breath then focuses her attention on Eshel and a Chinese official as they applaud the end of an ISRAELI FOLK DANCE NUMBER performed by a CHILDREN'S DANCE GROUP.

77 INT. BERGDORF GOODMAN - DAY

77

Norman hangs up and puts his phone down.

He looks around. Where is he?? Somehow he wandered deeper in this designer maze, into the area between the FENDI collection and the TOM FORD collection without realizing. And he has a WOMAN'S SHOE in his hand!

TWO SALESWOMEN, dressed in gothic gowns, are staring at him.

Norman carefully places the shoe back on one of the displays, smiling at the scary saleswomen as he dials a new number.

78 INT. BERGDORF GOODMAN - SPLIT WITH - INT. JO WILF'S OFFICE 78
DAY

Norman is by the dressing rooms, whispering into his phone.

NORMAN

Something big is going on, I can't be more specific, but if you saw the papers this morning, you'll know what I'm talking about.

Bill looks at Jo who looks at the rest of his team. Nobody has any idea what Norman is talking about.

One of the ASSISTANTS is even going through today's *Times* looking for clues, but can't seem to find anything of special interest.

BILL

I'm not following you. Did you speak to him or not?

NORMAN

Here, let me read to you the last message I received from Hanna.

BILL

Who's Hanna?

NORMAN

Hanna is Duby's assistant.

(CONTINUED)

BILL
Who the hell is Duby??

NORMAN
That is what I'm trying to explain to you. Eshel and Duby are sitting with the national security committee as we speak. There is no way for me to get through to them right now, but Hanna, who is on the other side of that closed door said...

Jo is losing his patience, he picks up the phone.

JO
Norman, cut the bullshit! When you get Eshel on the phone and he says yes to you, call me back. Until that happens, don't waste anymore of my time.

NORMAN
But Jo, this is time sensitive. If I can't tell Rabbi Blumenthal that you are putting up the money, someone else is going to buy the building. He needs an answer...

JO
(screaming)
Rabbi Blumenthal is not my fucking problem! There's a billion dollars on the line here! Fix this, Norman, or this is the last time you are speaking to anyone in this building. I don't care who started world war three... Think about that...

NORMAN (CONT'D)
Jo.-- Jo.-- Jo.-- Jo.-- They are about to launch a war in Syria that might escalate into world war three, what do you want me to do about it? He has a country to run. He's busy!

JO
Yeah. Me too. Goodbye Norman!

JO hangs up.

JO (CONT'D)
(to his team)
Fucking windbag! Why am I dizzy?

Norman looks at his phone with a desire to smash it into a million pieces on the floor, but instead... He dials again.

Hanna is walking up to her apartment in the middle of the night, carrying a LARGE BOX FULL OF CHINESE SOUVENIRS AND OFFICIAL GIFTS. She is tired and humorless.

79 CONTINUED:

THE RINGING ECHOES IN HER HALLWAY.

She places the box on the floor and sees it is Norman on her phone screen.

HANNA
(with tears)
Stop... Stop... Stop... Please,
Stop...

On Norman, waiting, hoping, she will pick up:

NORMAN
Why?... Why?... Why is it so hard
to pick up the goddamn phone...
This is the prime minister's
office, isn't there someone whose
job it is to answer the phone???

Hanna is sitting on her steps, in one hand a CHINESE KETTLE, in the other - her phone.

HANNA
Stop. Go away. You are sucking all
my energy out. I have important
things to deal with. Real problems
to solve. Please, stop...

Norman finally hangs up.

On Hanna, looking at the Chinese kettle with endless gratitude:

HANNA (CONT'D)
Thank you.

80 **INT. BERGDORF GOODMAN - LATER**

80

Norman is asleep on a reclining chair by the dressing rooms. His coat and hat are on his lap.

His phone is plugged into an outlet on the wall. They are both recharging.

SHOPPING TOURISTS walking by look down at Norman, as if he were one of the (less) meticulously designed mannequins in the store.

Norman's phone RINGS! It wakes Norman. He takes into one of the SMALL DRESSING ROOMS.

81 **- SHARED WITH - INT. PHILIP'S OFFICE:**

81

Philip has entered a small, private phone booth in the reception area of his office.

(CONTINUED)

PHILIP
It's done. Eshel's son is on the list. You don't want to know what this cost me. But he is on the list. Now, please deliver that Rabbi, Norman. If I decide I want to marry a camel with three humps, this rabbi still better be there with his talis.

NORMAN
Thank you, Philip. You'll have your Rabbi tomorrow.

PHILIP
Please don't make me wait. I want to be able to tell my parents by tomorrow that this is settled.

NORMAN
By tomorrow evening he'll be expecting your call.

PHILIP
Morning. Not evening.

NORMAN
It's delicate. Trust me. There is a process here. Five PM I'll call you. Okay?

They both hang up.

Norman dials Hanna again.

Hanna has just woken up (she is seven hours ahead). She takes the phone and locks herself in her bathroom, pushing her THREE YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER out the door - Once alone, she composes herself and answers:

HANNA
Good morning, Norman.

NORMAN
(whispering)
Did you sleep okay? Family sleep okay? Everybody happy over there, Hanna?

HANNA
We are fine... yes...

NORMAN
Yeah, it is nice to be right there in the inner circle with the prime minister.

(MORE)

82 CONTINUED:

NORMAN (CONT'D)
To be the person whispering in his ear, deciding who gets to speak with him and who doesn't. It feels good, doesn't it? Comfy. Everybody kissing your ass... But you remember that it has nothing to do with you, right? You are the smallest cog in the system. In case you forgot, Hanna. The smallest mistake and you are gone. It can all disappear. You can disappear... You are nothing Hanna. Just like me...

Hanna is listening in silence, as her daughter is banging on her door, crying...

83 **INT. BERGDORF GOODMAN - DUSK** 83

Norman hangs up. He looks down at his phone. We see his screen. He scrolls down his contact list, stopping at: "ESHEL PRIVATE CELL"

Norman deliberates for a brief moment, then, impulsively, presses CALL.

He holds his breath while he waits.

84 **INT. MICHA ESHEL'S CLOSET - NIGHT - ISRAEL - SAME TIME** 84

We are in a walk-in closet in Micha Eshel's private residence.

In a BOX with other unused items from before he was elected, we see an outdated cellphone vibrate and come to life.

We see the screen: "NORMAN"

Our view moves back to reveal Naomi, Eshel's wife, sleeping alone in her bed.

85 **INT. BERGDORF GOODMAN - DUSK** 85

Norman, looking out one of the windows overlooking Central Park at dusk, is holding his phone carelessly in his hand as it continues buzzing in Eshel's closet.

We close in on Norman's face. He is exhausted, consumed by frustration. It leads us back to--

86 **INT. BANQUET HALL - DAY** 86

Back in the hall, Rabbi Blumenthal is still speaking.

(CONTINUED)

RABBI BLUMENTHAL
Or... we leave here and start
looking for a new location,
wandering from one temporary
arrangement to another. Which in my
humble opinion would mean the end
of this community.

There is a collective sigh and groan around the table.

RABBI BLUMENTHAL (CONT'D)
Yeah. But... let's not despair -
this is where our friend Norman
Oppenheimer comes in. Norman...

All eyes shift to Norman.

Norman looks up, takes a sip from his plastic cup of orange
juice, wipes his mouth with a napkin, and -

NORMAN
I might have a donor who will match
your pledges up to seven million.
In other words, if you raise half
the amount, the building is yours.
Ours, I mean.

BOARD MEMBER 1
Who's the donor?

NORMAN
Can't say. He will remain
anonymous.

BOARD MEMBER 2
Who donates seven million dollars
and wants to stay anonymous?? That
doesn't make sense.

BOARD MEMBER 3
What do you care? He's a
modest man. As long as he's
good for it.

BOARD MEMBER 1
It's a legitimate question.
It's a lot of money, we
should know who he is.

BOARD MEMBER 2
Do we know this person? Is he, or
she, a member of the community?
Is he sitting here in the room
right now?

We cut to see the members of the board around the table,
looking at each other, then back at Norman.

BOARD MEMBER 2 (CONT'D)
What? Maybe this is a money
laundering scheme... Does he want
anything in return this anonymous
donor?

Norman is shaking his head with a polite smile on his face.
His lips are sealed.

(CONTINUED)

FEMALE BOARD MEMBER
I have a feeling I know who we are talking about. Does his last name start with an R?

BOARD MEMBER 1
Are we playing a guessing game now?

BOARD MEMBER 2
If he can say goodbye to seven million, why won't he just pay for the whole thing?
It's just a number for these people, it's not real money.

Our view moves down Norman's body, following his arm to his hands to his fingers, SCRATCHING his SWOLLEN AND INFLAMED CALF. It is an obsessive scratch that leaves BLOOD STAINS on Norman's fingernails when we see him bring his hand back up to the table..

BOARD MEMBER 1
Seven million is real. When you get into the hundreds of millions, that's another story.

RABBI BLUMENTHAL
Let's not get greedy. This is a very generous gift... And it should motivate our entire community to become involved.
(placing his hand on Norman's shoulder)
Thanks to Norman, we are only seven million dollars away from finally owning our home.

We close in on Norman, with the rabbi's hand weighing on his shoulder.

BOARD MEMBER 2 (O.S.)
But we need some kind of letter. How do we know he even exists? With all due respect...

FEMALE BOARD MEMBER (O.S.)
A letter of intent. You need a letter.

BOARD MEMBER 1 (O.S.)
Some kind of written commitment...

RABBI BLUMENTHAL
You can give us a letter, right? A formal letter...

Norman notices his blood-stained fingernails and immediately conceals them in his fist.

BOARD MEMBER 2 (O.S.)
Notarized. It should be notarized.

FEMALE BOARD MEMBER (O.S.)
Legally binding.

BOARD MEMBER 1
The money should be in escrow...

86 CONTINUED:

86

Just as the picture FADES OUT, we see Norman's face reveal the slightest sign of discomfort.

FADE OUT.

87 INT. MAIN SANCTUARY - LATER

87

Norman is sitting alone on one of the benches. He has his swollen leg up, resting on the seat next to him.

He is looking at the MEMORIAL PLAQUE - hundreds of names engraved in bronze sheets on the wall.

Cutting to a new angle, we realize we are seeing Norman from the POV of Rabbi Blumenthal who is standing by the door.

Feeling his presence, Norman puts his leg down. They exchange a smile.

RABBI BLUMENTHAL

It's worth saving... Whoever your guy is, he is doing a great thing. Thank you.

Norman accepts the acknowledgment with a nod. Just as R. Blumenthal is about to leave --

RABBI BLUMENTHAL (CONT'D)

You sure you can't tell me who it is? I probably should know. I'd like to thank him... Just between you and me. Is it Arthur Taub?

NORMAN

He was very clear about staying anonymous.

RABBI BLUMENTHAL

Maybe just... Can you tell me why he is doing this?

Norman thinks about this for a moment.

NORMAN

He can afford it. He knows me. I told him about the community and the history of the building, and he said sure, why not. It is money he gives away anyway... If not to us, then to some other charity.

The rabbi accepts that answer, although we sense there is a trace of skepticism still there.

RABBI BLUMENTHAL

And why does he insist on remaining anonymous?

(CONTINUED)

There is a fraction of a second before Norman responds that indicates he might not have a good answer. But then he is back on the ball --

NORMAN

Because if people find out he did this kind of thing, there will be hundreds of other requests. It is not his usual type of charity. He is doing this as a favor to me. And I promised him I won't reveal his name.

The rabbi is nodding his head, examining Norman's face.

RABBI BLUMENTHAL

Well. It is a good thing. That's all I can say. Please thank him, on behalf of all of us.

Not that raising the other half is going to be easy... But the challenge - It's good. It's good. We should all open up our hearts... and wallets. God knows there are some big wallets in this community.

(he pauses)

If there is any way you think it would be appropriate to honor this mysterious man, or woman, some kind of dedication... Or if there is something you would like me to do...

Norman has been waiting for this opening from the beginning of the scene.

NORMAN

Now that you mention it, the person who introduced me to Mr. Anonymous is my nephew, a very successful young lawyer, maybe I mentioned him to you - Philip Cohen. He just got engaged to a very sweet girl...

RABBI BLUMENTHAL

Mazaltov.

NORMAN

...from a Korean background. He could use some help with her conversion and officiating the wedding.

R. Blumenthal is nodding his head, understanding that he is cornered.

RABBI BLUMENTHAL

Philip Cohen?

NORMAN

If it was simple, he wouldn't need your help...

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED:

A beat. Then:

RABBI BLUMENTHAL
Have him give me a call. I'll see
what I can do.

A transaction has been made.

NORMAN
Thank you, Rabbi.

R. Blumenthal places his hat on his head, takes a moment to himself, then he exits the building.

Once alone in the sanctuary, after he hears the main doors shut, Norman lifts his swollen leg back up.

He pulls at the cuff of his pants enough to reveal the BLEEDING HIVES on his calf and around the swollen ankle - But Norman doesn't want to look at it so he immediately covers it back up.

He takes out his phone. We see his screen: He goes to CONTACTS. He scrolls through the names on his screen - hundreds of names zoom by.

They mesh with: The MEMORIAL PLAQUES on the wall - the names fill the frame - Zoltans and Sigmunds and Isadoras and Miklos, Weinbergers, Mandelbaums, Rolats and Lefkowitzs - dissolving into each other, creating a blurry collage of contacts on Norman's phone and the dead sounding Jewish names on the wall.

We hear Norman on the phone:

NORMAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Philip. It's your uncle Norman.
You're all set. Call Rabbi
Blumenthal. He's expecting your
call.

FADE TO BLACK.

88 **INT. ESHEL'S OFFICIAL RESIDENCE - NIGHT - ISRAEL**

88

Duby and Eshel are standing outside a door leading into an official reception area.

There are 2 SECRET SERVICE MEN standing near them, but Duby and Eshel are speaking as if they were alone.

ESHTEL
I don't like this. It smells like
something Maor would do...

DUBY
We can learn a thing or two from
Maor. Sometimes you have to hold
your nose and smile politely.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DUBY (CONT'D)

It is all a question of balance.
The Russians need to see that you
are aware of their interests.

ESHEL

Just so that we both understand
what we are talking about. A
Russian gas company is jeopardizing
our peace talks and getting between
us and the Turks because
reconciliation in this area is a
threat to their monopoly in Europe.

Duby nods his head. Eshel doesn't like this...

DUBY

Even if it seems dirty to you, it
is important and necessary,. The
Americans are backing our talks for
the exact same reason - to break
the Russian monopoly in the
European gas market. No difference.
For us it is just a question of
keeping the right balance between
all these interests.

ESHEL

So now we are calling it 'balance'?

DUBY

I like the word balance more than I
like compromise...

Duby opens the door and with a slight touch on Eshel's lower
back, he pushes him into the reception.

We hear cameras clicking from the other side of the door.

A89

INT. RECEPTION ROOM - NIGHT

A89

Eshel has a frozen smile on his face as a DELEGATION OF
RUSSIAN BUSINESSMEN is being introduced to him in procession.

Duby is standing next to him, both impressed and a bit
worried by Eshel's grin.

There is a SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETER translating the Russian
to English.

INTERPRETER

Yury Golubev deputy energy minister
of the Russian Federation.

Handshakes and head nods.

(CONTINUED)

INTERPRETER (CONT'D)
Valery Spektor, head of the general agency for legal protection of Military, special and dual-use intellectual property at the ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation.

Handshakes and head nods.

INTERPRETER (CONT'D)
Oleg Dubik, previous president of Ufa State Petroleum Technological University and current head of the directorate of legal support for international business. And Igor Seleznev, deputy head of booster compressor station No.2

From Eshel's POV we notice Ron Maor is also in the room, mingling with Russian delegation members in a way that is much too friendly.

The fake smile on Eshel's face goes sour right before the cut to:

INT. ESHEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - ISRAEL

Eshel, in his underwear, is pacing the room.

ESHEL
Something doesn't feel right. I don't know what it is. But there is a lump in my chest when there shouldn't be. My intentions are pure. They are. I'm pretty sure they are.

He pauses, as if to check within himself for any contaminating intentions.

ESHEL (CONT'D)
A decent, moral, good human being can't function in these circles of power, money, national pride. It's impossible.

He enters his walk-in closet and is drawn to look in the box containing his old, private CELL PHONE.

He picks up the phone and his charging cable.

ESHEL (CONT'D)
The internal moral compass that a private person navigates with, is completely useless for a leader of a country. Right?

CONTINUED:

We now see that all this time he has been talking to Naomi, his wife, who is lying in bed with a book in her hand, half listening to him without losing her place on the page.

Eshel plugs his phone cable into an outlet. It comes to life. Eshel smiles.

ESHEL (CONT'D)

Look at that, my private life still has a signal.

NAOMI

I meant to ask you - do you want me to continue paying the bill for that phone? It's costing us about four hundred shekel a month...

ESHEL

(going through missed calls)

Yeah, lets keep it. But we should try to get on a better plan. They must have a cheaper plan than that. Why is it four hundred shekel? I haven't used it in months. Do they know it's mine?

NAOMI

I'll call customer service tomorrow.

From his POV, we see his screen as he scrolls passed the missed calls from Norman.

ESHEL

Norman Oppenheimer was looking for me. I should call him. He has always helped that lump in my chest disappear.

NAOMI

And I never understood why. If anything, he should make that lump feel worse.

ESHEL

Why do you say that? He's a good friend. I've never met anyone as generous as he is...

Eshel climbs into bed.

NAOMI

Generous is a strange way to describe him.

ESHEL

He is! He has a tremendous heart.

She puts her book down.

(CONTINUED)

NAOMI

Okay, without saying anything negative about Norman Oppenheimer, he's not your "friend." He's someone that you take advantage of when it's convenient for you.

ESHEL

I doubt he feels that way. That's actually pretty insulting.

NAOMI

No it's not. It's just the reality. When you needed him in New York you allowed him to enter your life, now that you don't need him anymore, you completely ignore him. But I'm not complaining about that because I think he's an embarrassing human being and he shouldn't have been in your life in the first place.

ESHEL

(placing his hand over his chest)

Now you're making that lump feel worse. You really think I deceived him in some way?

NAOMI

Maybe not consciously. And I believe you that you consider him a friend. But I think the right thing to do, at least at this point, is not to take anymore favors from him.

Eshel thinks about this for a second. He seems to agree with what Naomi is saying. He puts his phone down and looks over at Naomi. Then... Switching tone:

ESHEL

I don't remember you protesting when Norman offered to help connect us to that Harvard guy for Davidy...

NAOMI

No, but I didn't feel comfortable with it and it still bothers me.

ESHEL

But you went along with it... We took the favor.

NAOMI

Honestly - what went through my mind was that Norman probably can't deliver on this anyway, that it's just another empty promise, so I didn't see the point in making a fuss over it.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED:

ESHTEL

And you also really want Davidy to get into Harvard... so you figured you'll let this one go. If it doesn't help, it won't hurt either... Right?

NAOMI

No. In fact, if you must know - I did think it might hurt Davidy. The last person in the world he wants a referral from, especially at Harvard, is Norman Oppenheimer. But I didn't want to hurt Norman's feelings and since I didn't think anything would come of it anyway, yes, I let it go.

They remain in silence for a beat.

ESHTEL

I'm glad you didn't hurt his feelings. That was very nice of you.

NAOMI

(turning around and
shutting off the light)
You're in no position to judge me,
Mr. Prime Minister.

90 **INT. ESHTEL'S BEDROOM - LATER - ISRAEL** 90

Eshel in his bed. He can't sleep. It is that lump in his chest. We close in on his worried face.

FADE OUT.

91 OMITTED 91

92 **A NEWSPAPER HEADLINE** 92

"Unnamed New York businessman is central figure in an investigation into payments made to Israel's prime minister"

With a picture of Eshel, and Duby on the edge of the frame whispering something in the prime minister's ear.

93 **INT./EXT. STARBUCKS - DAY** 93

The Starbucks is extremely crowded. Norman is by the window bar with his PAPER.

To his left and right, people and their elaborate coffees and muffins are pushing against him, while he reads:

(CONTINUED)

93 CONTINUED:

93

"Israeli prosecutors asked a Jerusalem court on Tuesday for permission to take testimony from a foreign man..."

Norman's brain is working.

Out the window, across the street, we notice a MAN who looks as if he just stepped out of an East European Shtetl, looking directly at Norman.

94 **INT. ESHEL'S RESIDENCE - MORNING - ISRAEL**

94

Eshel, by his breakfast table, eating a croissant with jam together with his 2 BODY GUARDS, is looking at the front page of an Israeli paper where this mysterious investigation is the big story of the day with a bold headline that reads: ***"IT STINKS"***

And a caricature of Eshel as a PROUD PEACOCK on top of a pile of rotten EGGS.

95 **INT. BRUCE SCHWARTZ'S OFFICE IN THE WHITE HOUSE - DAY**

95

Bruce is on the phone, while he scans the newspaper on his desk.

We see another piece of the item (or hear Bruce read it):

"Speculation about Eshel's future has weakened him politically even as he undertakes delicate negotiations with Israel's neighbors..."

BRUCE

Is this serious? Do we need to be worried?

96 **INT. DUBY'S OFFICE - DAY - ISRAEL**

96

Duby is on the other side of the line, looking down at a pile of Israeli newspapers, all with variations of the word **CORRUPTION** in their headlines.

DUBY

(clearly very worried)
I don't know yet.

BRUCE

Can we help?

DUBY

Maybe. I don't know who this businessman is yet, but if he is an American citizen, he can't testify without your justice department being part of the procedure.

BRUCE

Let me look into this.

100

INT. CAROL RASKIN'S OFFICE - DAY

100

We are in the United States Attorney's office in lower Manhattan.

There are 5 LAWYERS in this room, one of them, the person in charge, is CAROL RASKIN, who is speaking directly to--

Alex Green, sitting across her desk.

Carol is holding a copy of the New York Times in her hand as she disciplines Alex.

CAROL

You have the president of the United States inquiring about an investigation that I don't even know about! This is not the Middle East, Ms. Green! In this part of the world, there are rules. There are regulations. There are agreements between countries on how to obtain evidence in a criminal case... Especially if it has to do with a leader of a foreign country! How could I not know this investigation was going on??

ALEX

Because it's not going on. Yet. It is a newspaper headline, not an investigation.

CAROL

So where are they getting this from? Is the Israeli police questioning an American citizen or not?

ALEX

As far as I understand, they're still figuring out if they have enough information to make a proper request. The witness doesn't even know he is a witness at this point.

CAROL

(confused)

Wait. You didn't speak to this guy yet?

Alex hesitates before she answers.

CAROL (CONT'D)

It's a simple question. Did you speak to him?

ALEX

I did. On a train. A casual conversation that lead me to make some inquiries and file a report. That is all it is right now.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

100 CONTINUED:

ALEX (CONT'D)
A report. The Israeli prosecution is still considering whether or not to submit a request for legal assistance. But someone there leaked this to the Israeli press before I even had a chance to speak to the witness.

CAROL
Who is he? What's his name? Your witness...

ALEX
He claims he is a friend of yours. Do you still want to know his name?

CAROL
I'll find out sooner or later... Who is he?

ALEX
His name is Norman Oppenheimer.

101 **EXT. OUTSIDE THE STARBUCKS - DAY** 101

Norman is exiting the Starbucks with his paper under his arm and his coffee in his hand.

But then he stops in his steps. He thinks for a moment. He has an idea...

102 **INT. CAROL RASKIN'S OFFICE - DAY** 102

CAROL
Norman Oppenheimer?

Alex nods her head.

Carol places the newspaper on her desk, leans back in her chair, and smiles.

CAROL (CONT'D)
Norman Oppenheimer?

ALEX
Yes.

CAROL
Are you kidding me?

Alex shakes her head. Carol loses her smile.

CAROL (CONT'D)
Unbelievable.
(takes a moment)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED:

CAROL (CONT'D)
You're going to topple down a democratically elected, acting prime minister and jeopardize America's long term foreign policy because of something Norman Oppenheimer told you on a train??

Alex remains silent.

103 INT. STARBUCKS - DAY

103

Norman is back in the Starbucks, waiting for the restroom. As he waits, he is restless. He seems excited about something. Perhaps he is rehearsing a conversation in his head.

104 INT. CAROL RASKIN'S OFFICE - DAY

104

CAROL
(deep breath)
Alright. I'm glad we had this meeting. No harm done. I'm going to call Bruce Schwartz and tell him there is no investigation involving an American citizen going on. End of story. False alarm. We can all relax.

Carol looks up at Alex to see if she is understanding her.

But Alex's expression is anything but relaxing.

CAROL (CONT'D)
Don't give me that look. Norman Oppenheimer is not a *friend* of mine. I know him like I know four million other people. I don't even remember what the connection is. He knows a cousin of mine... He sends me e-mails... I don't think I've ever responded to him. If he turns out to be a crook, I couldn't care less. But trust me- Norman Oppenheimer might be a royal nudge, but he is not your villain. He's a poor, lonely shmo trying to survive. And he is a pathological liar, in case you didn't notice.

ALEX
I don't think he is a villain either, but over the past three years he has been unusually generous toward the prime minister of Israel and has created an intricate network of people who benefit from the access he provides for them. *In my part of the world* - that kind of behavior warrants an investigation. Especially if he is a pathological liar...

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED:

Carol takes her point, but before she has a chance to respond, Alex's phone RINGS.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Sorry. I'll shut it off...

As she reaches to shut off her phone, she sees the name on the screen: NORMAN OPPENHEIMER

She shows the screen to Carol as it continues to ring.

CAROL
Why is he calling you?

ALEX
I don't know.

CAROL
I thought you said he doesn't know about this.

ALEX
He doesn't. Not from me...

105 INT. STARBUCKS RESTROOM - AT THE SAME TIME 105

Norman is now in the restroom, anxiously waiting for Alex to pick up. He has balanced his coffee on the rim of the sink.

106 INT. CAROL RASKIN'S OFFICE - AT THE SAME TIME 106

CAROL
Go ahead. Take the call. Put him on speaker.

Alex places her phone on the desk and puts Norman on speaker.

ALEX
Hello.

WE INTERCUT BETWEEN THE RESTROOM AND CAROL'S OFFICE:

NORMAN
Alex Green!! This is Norman from the train. Norman Oppenheimer. I've been meaning to call... How are you? How have you been?

ALEX
(her eyes locked on Carol's)
I'm fine, Norman. How are you?

NORMAN
Fine. Fine. Can't complain. I just got in from Chicago actually...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Listen, do you have a minute? You probably know why I'm calling.

ALEX

I can guess, yes.

NORMAN

Don't worry. I know how discrete you are, so if I'm imposing, feel free to tell me it's none of my business. I'm not going to ask you for the guy's name, either... Unless you can tell me. Can you?

Alex looks at Carol for guidance. She seems just as clueless.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Forget it. Forget it. I didn't ask. I respect your professionalism. But just tell me one thing... You're the one dealing with this investigation, right? This is your department, isn't it?

ALEX

Norman...

Carol is signaling with her hand to Alex to let Norman go on.

NORMAN

Yes...

ALEX (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. Please continue...

NORMAN

I'll tell you why I'm calling. I hope it's okay. I know this is delicate but I feel it is my duty. I think I can help you out.

A pause for quizzical looks between Alex and Carol.

Norman, who is hyper, inadvertently knocks his coffee over. It is on his pants, the floor, everywhere.

There is an INDUSTRIAL MOP in the room. Norman tries to detach the mop from the BUCKET AND WRINGER as he speaks, but it is stuck--

NORMAN (CONT'D)

It is no secret that I'm on Eshel's team. I support him. I love him. I think he is doing amazing things... but I was just thinking - whoever this person is, this unnamed businessman, I probably know him. Right? Maybe I can shed some light on whatever it is that happened and help you make sense of it. Another point of view for you to consider, that's all I'm offering here. If it helps Eshel too, it is the least I can do...

(CONTINUED)

106 CONTINUED:

Carol is completely bewildered by Norman's tactics.

Alex seems too shocked to say anything.

And Norman, in the restroom, has finally detached the mop, splashing soap-water all over himself and the room and toppling over the bucket.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
What do you say, Alex? Meet me for coffee. There is a reason why we met on that train. You never know... Right? You never know...

Alex looks up at Carol for her verdict. Reluctantly, Carol nods her head with approval.

ALEX
How is today at four? Come to my office in the consulate.

Norman smiles at his reflection in the restroom mirror. He did it! He got his foot in.

NORMAN
Perfect.

As he grabs a bunch of paper towels out of the dispenser...

107 **INT. STARBUCKS - CONTINUOUS** 107

Norman, wet and disheveled, with his wet newspaper still under his arm, casually exits the restroom, stepping over the puddle that has formed around the door, nodding his head apologetically to the 3 ANNOYED CUSTOMERS waiting outside.

We catch a glimpse of SHTETL MAN, now standing on line for coffee. But Norman is too preoccupied to notice him.

Norman is on his phone as he exits the Starbucks.

108 **INT. PHILIP'S OFFICE - DAY** 108

PHILIP
(whispering)
I can't talk to you right now.

109 **EXT. MADISON AVE - DAY** 109

Norman walks down the avenue.

NORMAN
Yes you can. Meet me downstairs. I'm right around the corner from you.

(CONTINUED)

109 CONTINUED:

PHILIP
Did you find out who it is?

NORMAN
Better. I'm meeting the
investigator who is in charge of
the whole thing. Come downstairs.
Give me five minutes.

PHILIP
Norman, I can't...

But Norman has hung up.

110 **EXT. ENTRANCE TO PHILIP'S OFFICE BUILDING - DAY** 110

Madison Ave. - busy, crowded mid-town sidewalks, and Norman,
waiting anxiously by the entrance to Philip's office
building.

Norman sees Philip rushing out.

NORMAN
Thanks for coming down...

PHILIP
What are you doing? You're acting
like a maniac. Look at you...
Why are you getting involved? This
thing is bad for Israel, bad for
America, bad for Jews, bad for
everybody. Step away...

NORMAN
It is bad for everybody, that's why
I want to help...

PHILIP
How can you help? It's a political
war going on seven thousand miles
from here. Eshel's rivals found
this cockamamie story and they're
going to use it to take him down.
There is nothing you can do about
it. Don't get involved. It is too
big.

Philip looks at Norman to see if his reasoning is entering
his head. It isn't--

NORMAN
Just tell me one thing.
Hypothetically, if this guy, this
businessman, came to you for
advice. If he wanted you to
represent him. What would you tell
him?

(CONTINUED)

PHILIP

Why? You want to approach him? It's a bad idea...

NORMAN

Maybe if we give him an option that isn't so harmful to Eshel...

Philip looks at Norman, trying to figure out what his real interest here is. Norman is looking back at him, waiting for an answer.

PHILIP

I'd throw him out of my office. That's what I'd do. I wouldn't want anything to do with him. He is a threat to an acting prime minister. Even if it doesn't end up having any criminal implication, apparently his dealings with Eshel are embarrassing enough so that his political rivals think they can use him to hurt Eshel. Eshel's people can't ignore that. They have too much to lose... They're going to strike back. Dig up everything they can find on this guy. The FBI will get involved... No matter how you look at it, this guy is fucked. And you want to avoid him like the plague.

NORMAN

What if you knew him and he was asking you for help?

Philip takes this in. Suddenly it dawns on him - Norman may be the unnamed businessman. He carefully considers his next words.

PHILIP

Are you saying something I don't want to hear? What are you saying?

NORMAN

I'm not saying anything. I'm just asking.

PHILIP

Norman, listen to me. Whoever this unnamed businessman is, he is in very serious trouble. And he needs to be very careful about what he says now and who he speaks to.

Norman thinks this over for a moment.

NORMAN

I'm only asking if there is a legal way to defuse this?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED:

NORMAN (CONT'D)
If I'm meeting the investigator,
and I find out who this man is, I
want to be able to offer him
something. Let's think creatively.

Philip can't conceal his panic. He takes a step back.

PHILIP
I'm not sure I can offer him
anything. This man needs a very
good criminal lawyer. Don't be
creative. And don't meet this
investigator.

They look at each other.

PHILIP (CONT'D)
Can you do that?

Norman seems confused. But he nods his head.

Philip backs away, verifying with his eyes that Norman has
internalized his instructions. He disappears into the
building.

Norman is pacing the street with his phone in his hand. It is
bigger than him. And he can't resist it...

Across the street, we see THE SHTETL MAN, but Norman doesn't
notice him.

111 INT. ISRAELI PARLIAMENT - DAY - ISRAEL

111

Eshel is in his seat on the parliament floor, listening to,
absorbing - a scathing speech delivered with much pathos by
RON MAOR.

We focus on Eshel's face, on DUBY's face, on Hanna's face, as
they are forced to hear sentences like:

RON MAOR
We've seen politicians with no
backbone gain power before - that
is not new... We've seen political
opportunists who grossly distort
the will of the citizens who voted
them into office, only to
shamefully gain favor in the eyes
of foreign rulers in service of
interests that are not our own -
that is not new either. But never
in our nation's history has a man
of such low moral standing, so
spiritually empty, so
unapologetically hedonistic,
selfish I dare say - been in a
position to do so much damage to
our people and our nation, as the
man I'm pointing to right now.

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:

111

Hanna's phone is blinking. She looks at her screen. It is NORMAN.

She shows it to Duby, who is standing next to her by the side door to the parliament hall.

Duby shakes his head.

DUBY
No. Not today. I can't deal with Norman.

HANNA
But if I don't answer he will drive me crazy all day. He'll call every three minutes. It's easier to just answer.

DUBY
Alright, but keep it short. Don't let him get involved in anything.

Hanna steps out as she answers her phone.

112 **INT. ISRAELI PARLIAMENT CORRIDORS - DAY - ISRAEL - CONTINUOUS**

HANNA
Norman. How are you?

113 **EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - DAY**

113

Norman is walking and talking on his phone. Hyper and excited.

NORMAN
Forget me. How are you??

HANNA
Busy as usual.

NORMAN
Any chance you can connect me to the prime minister or to Duby?

HANNA
I'm afraid they're...

NORMAN
Wait, before you say no. Listen to what I have to say. They're going to want to hear this. I'm meeting with the woman who is in charge of this investigation that is going on. Her name is Alex Green. She's a good friend of mine and she agreed to meet me today at four.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

113 CONTINUED:

NORMAN (CONT'D)
I'm going to try and get as much information as I can, but if Duby wants to brief me before this meeting, that might make the meeting more productive...

Hanna doesn't know what to say.

HANNA
Norman, I don't think it is such a good idea for you...

NORMAN
Will you give them this message? Tell them I'm meeting with Alex Green today. They can use me however they want. I'm like a puppet in their hands. It's a friendly conversation, off the record... She's a good friend. I've known her for years. My wife used to babysit her...

HANNA
Norman. Hold on a second. Just wait on the line.

114 INT/EXT. CHOCOLATIER - DAY - CONTINUOUS

114

Norman stops by the CHOCOLATIER where he saw Eshel in the beginning of the film while he waits. We see his POV looking into the shop: beautiful, colorful chocolate treats.

Rich chocolate and direct access to power - his heart is palpitating with excitement. Finally:

NORMAN
(to his phone)
Duby! I'm so happy to hear your voice. How are you? What's going on? Can you tell me who...

115 INT. ISRAELI PARLIAMENT CORRIDORS - DAY - ISRAEL

115

We see Duby walking out of the parliament hall with Hanna's phone, fuming. He enters a SMOKING AREA closed off with glass walls, where he can finally raise his voice.

DUBY
Shut up, Norman.

NORMAN
What?

DUBY
Shut up and listen to what I'm saying to you. I don't want you meeting anybody on our behalf.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

115 CONTINUED:

DUBY (CONT'D)
Creating the impression that in
some way you are connected to our
office is a severe punishable
crime. Do you understand me?

SILENCE. Hanna is watching Duby on the other side of the
glass.

DUBY (CONT'D)
I want to make sure I am clear
about this. Stop using the prime
minister's name. Just stop. Don't
do it anymore. He is not your
friend and you do not have any
relationship with him. I forbid you
to meet with this woman.
Do you understand what I'm saying?
Answer me.

Norman's eyes are focused on a tray with beautiful NUT COATED
TRUFFLES.

Then the focus changes - reflected in the shop window, Norman
notices the THE SHTETL MAN standing across the street. He
realizes that this man has been following him around since he
first saw him through the Starbucks window.

After a pause.

NORMAN
Yes. I understand.

DUBY
Good. Goodbye Norman.

Duby hangs up, exits the smoking area and hands the phone
back to Hanna as if the phone itself is contaminated.

DUBY (CONT'D)
Enough. Don't answer his calls
anymore. He is cut off. No more.
Just the thought of him talking to
an investigator makes me want to
vomit. And find out who Alex Green
is...

Something is bothering Hanna.

DUBY (CONT'D)
What is it?

HANNA
I'm not sure it was such a good
idea to insult Norman that way...

(CONTINUED)

DUBY

That's the problem with these Normans - they're a double edged sword - if you keep them in the loop, you become more and more dependant on them until they gradually own you - if you cut them off, they blackmail you for the rest of your life.

HANNA

I think he is just trying to help. If you would have told him nicely that he would be helping us if he didn't speak to anyone, I think that would have been more effective.

DUBY

I don't want to talk about Norman anymore. Lets find out who this businessman is. I need a name! In a day every newspaper in the world will want to know who this man is and we need to be prepared...

He walks back into the parliament hall.

INT. ISRAELI PARLIAMENT - DAY - ISRAEL

With Ron Maor's speech still in the background, we see DUBY hand a SMALL FOLDED NOTE to an USHER who brings it to Eshel.

RON MAOR (O.S.)

How will we explain this tragic, historical accident to our children and grandchildren? How, I ask you? By preventing it. By voting against this dangerous agreement, masquerading as a peace treaty.

Eshel receives the note. He opens it.

It reads: **"WHO IS HE?"**

Eshel looks over at DUBY, signaling with his hands and sincere eyes - "I have no idea".

RON MAOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Giving in to our enemy's every last demand is not peace!! It's called LOSING!

Heckling and uproar in the room! DUBY exchanges a final concerned glance with Eshel before he leaves the parliament hall, pulling Hanna with him.

117

INT. OUTSIDE PARLIAMENT HALL - ISRAEL - CONTINUOUS

117

A tight shot on Duby and Hanna.

DUBY

Call Norman. Tell him you want to apologize for how I spoke to him. Then tell him we know who the guy is and we are not worried. This unnamed businessman has so many skeletons in his closet, sex offenses, tax fraud, money laundering, the man is a total mess - no prosecutor in the world would dare put him on the witness stand.

Hanna is confused.

HANNA

You know who he is? Who is he??

DUBY

Just do what I said. And make it sound as if you are telling this to him in confidence, behind my back. Make him swear not to repeat what he just heard.

Hanna gets it.

HANNA

You think he'll repeat it all to the investigator.

DUBY

He'll be trying to prove to her that he knows what's going on. And not only to her. He'll spread the word all over the place and he'll probably exaggerate it so that it sounds even worse. Call him. Make him believe there is nothing to worry about. His beloved prime minister is perfectly fine. Go. Make the call.

HANNA

But how do you know he is going to meet with that investigator? You told him not to.

Duby smiles.

DUBY

Just call him.

118

EXT. INT. SUBWAY STATION - DAY

118

Norman is going down the escalator towards the Subway in Grand Central Station. He is on his phone--

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN
 He did? --You know who he is, the
 businessman?? --...I can't tell you
 how relieved I am to hear you say
 this. Thank you, Hanna. Please tell
 Duby that I understand his
 situation completely. And if there
 is anything he needs me to do, he
 knows I'm here for him and for the
 prime minister. -- That's what I
 like to hear. The prime minister is
 a very lucky man to have you on his
 side, Hanna. You know that, right?
 Really, this kind of loyalty is so
 rare. It's sacred. I hope you know
 that... --Of course. Say no more.
 My lips are sealed. Good luck,
 Hanna.

By now Norman has stepped off the escalator and pulled out his METRO CARD. But instead of going through the turnstile, he stops in his steps.

Invigorated with a new sense of purpose, Norman changes his mind about taking the subway. He turns back to get on the escalator going back up to street level.

As he heads up, he sees the Shtetl man on the downward escalator. THEIR EYES MEET as they pass each other.

The Shtetl man immediately turns around and heads up against the direction of the escalator, so not to lose Norman.

At this point Norman understands that he is being followed. He quickly cuts through the crowd towards the exit.

119-121 OMITTED

119-121

122 **EXT. STREET, NEAR GRAND CENTRAL STATION - DAY**

122

Norman exits Grand Central into the busy street, startled.

We see Norman's POV - New Yorkers of all ages, color, class and ethnicity - but no shtetl man.

Then he sees him exit the station, casually walking away. Norman runs after him.

NORMAN
 Hay. You. Hold on a second.

SHTETL MAN
 Me?

NORMAN
 Yes. You. Why are you following me? What do you want?

(CONTINUED)

SHTETL MAN

First of all, nice to meet you.
Srul Katz.

Srul pulls out of his pocket a pack of BUSINESS CARDS wrapped in a rubber band. He wants to give one to Norman, but Norman steps back.

NORMAN

No. Excuse me. Don't give me that.
I don't want it. Stop following me
around. Okay?

SRUL

Why are you angry? Don't be angry.
I'm not following you around. By
sheer coincidence I happen to be
going where you are going. What do
you want me to do? I apologize. I'm
sorry...

Norman looks at the man, evaluating him. He is unkempt, on the heavy side, with some stains on his shirt and an old, worn-out hat on his head.

Norman nods his head in disbelief and is about to turn away.

SRUL (CONT'D)

But if we're already talking, If I
can take a few minutes of your
time, I'm glad to finally meet you
in person. You're the Eshel guy,
right? Oppenheimer. Maybe Zvi Fink
mentioned me to you.

NORMAN

How do you know Zvi?

SRUL

Zvi and I are very close. My wife
practically grew up in his parents
house. I'm helping him out with a
few things. Actually I'm seeing him
later tonight. You should come say
hello. I know he'd be very happy to
see you.

Norman seems confused. He just looks at Srul, not saying a word.

SRUL (CONT'D)

What's wrong? You look shaken up.
How can I help you? What do you
need?

NORMAN

What do I need??

SRUL

Yeah. Give me the honor of helping
you out. You're a *choshuv e'man*.

(MORE)

122 CONTINUED:

SRUL (CONT'D)
Let me walk with you. Where are
you going?

NORMAN
To the Israeli consulate on Second
Ave.

Srul puts his arm in Norman's and begins to walk with him.

Norman is too surprised by this strange gesture to resist it.
They walk together.

123 **EXT. STREET - DAY**

123

Norman and Srul turn the corner together.

SRUL KATZ
So, who's the guy? Do you know who
he is, the New York businessman?

NORMAN
If I knew, would I tell you?

SRUL KATZ
I heard a rumor. But I was sworn to
secrecy.

NORMAN
Don't believe what you hear.

SRUL KATZ
You obviously know more than me,
but whoever it is, one thing is for
sure. It's a conspiracy. They found
a way to assassinate Eshel, without
actually killing him.

Norman thinks about this for a second.

NORMAN
Don't bury Eshel yet. Trust me.
He's not going anywhere.

SRUL KATZ
Why, what do you know?

NORMAN
I can't go into details, but let's
just say this unnamed businessman
is... He's a nobody, a parasite,
trying to extort the prime
minister. He is the lowest of the
low... He made up a story. The
whole thing is made up. Eshel
doesn't even know the man...

Norman stops. He is suddenly having a hard time stabilizing
his breathing. Srul notices Norman's stress and waits
patiently for Norman to recompose.

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED:

NORMAN (CONT'D)
I really shouldn't say anything
else.

Srul faces Norman with a sympathetic look. They continue walking in silence.

124 EXT. STREET, CORNER OF CONSULATE - DAY

124

They arrive at the consulate.

NORMAN
I think I'm okay from here on.
Thank you. I appreciate it.

SRUL KATZ
You sure? I'm happy to go in with
you.

NORMAN
No. That's okay.

SRUL KATZ
I can wait for you outside...

NORMAN
No. Thank you. I'm good from here.
Really, thank you very much. I
appreciate it.

Srul pulls out his business cards and hands one to Norman.

Norman looks at it. It reads: "**KATZ STRATEGIES, INC.**"

SRUL KATZ
Call me, if you ever need anything.
Anything at all. I'm happy to help.
Zei gezunt.

Norman nods his head, perplexed by the whole encounter.

As Norman walks into the consulate, he turns back to see that Srul Katz is still standing there, smiling, waving.

125 INT. ISRAELI CONSULATE - DAY

125

All we see is the back of Norman's head and his somewhat distorted reflection in the ONE WAY MIRROR that separates him from the security guard behind the window.

NORMAN
(to the intercom)
My name is Norman Oppenheimer. I
have an appointment with Alex
Green.

(CONTINUED)

SECURITY GUARD'S VOICE
Please empty your pockets into the
tray.

A tray is pushed out from the bottom of the window. Norman pulls out his wallet, keys, change, Srul Katz's business card, and his EPIPEN. He places the items on the tray.

SECURITY GUARD'S VOICE (CONT'D)
Do you have a cell phone?

NORMAN
I do.

SECURITY GUARD'S VOICE
Please shut it off and put it in
the tray as well.

NORMAN
Will you give it back to me?

SECURITY GUARD'S VOICE
When you leave.

Norman places his phone on the tray. The phone and the rest of the items are swallowed into the one-way mirror divider.

SECURITY GUARD'S VOICE (CONT'D)
Please enter, collect your
possessions on the tray, and follow
the yellow line to the third door
on your right.

A LOUD BUZZER IS HEARD, UNLOCKING THE DOOR.

INT. CONSULATE SECURITY BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

This is a two door system. The second door won't open until the first door is closed. But Norman is afraid to have both doors closed at the same time, so he keeps his foot in the first door.

The walls of this small, isolated security booth are all dark, one-way mirrors.

SECURITY GUARD VOICE
Mr. Oppenheimer, you need to close
the first door for the second door
to open.

Before he removes his foot from the door - Norman looks back outside -

The glare of daylight is strong and blinding, but Norman is pretty sure Srul Katz is still standing there, smiling.

We sense that Norman is recognizing something in Srul's face - as if he has seen this smile before.

126 CONTINUED:

But the door closes. And locks. Before Norman can put his finger on why and where Srul is familiar to him.

Norman presses his face against the one-way mirror to try and see what is behind it, but all he sees is his own distorted reflection. Norman panics and tries to reopen the door.

NORMAN
(to the one-way mirror)
You know what, I forgot something.
I'm canceling my meeting. Can I
have my phone back?

No response.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
(knocking on the window)
Hello? Anybody there? I'm not going
in. Can I have my stuff back?
Hello... Hello... please, open the
door! Open the door!

A LOUD BUZZER IS HEARD. The second door unlocks. Norman opens the second door and goes through. The door shuts on our lens, creating a BLACK SCREEN.

We hear over black:

ALEX'S VOICE
It's Okay. Come.

NORMAN'S VOICE
They told me not to meet with you.

A127 **EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - NIGHT**

A127

It is the end of the work day, Manhattan at its most crowded hour.

Everything is a blur, except for Norman, walking the streets, lost in a daze, with his phone in one hand, and an ENVELOPE in the other.

We close in on Norman's face. His eyes are BLOODSHOT AND SWOLLEN.

127 **INT. ISRAELI CONSULATE CORRIDOR**

127

We see the yellow line on the floor, as Norman's feet are walking down the corridor.

At the end of the yellow line, we see Alex waiting at the far end of this naked, fluorescent lit corridor.

ALEX'S VOICE
Who?

(CONTINUED)

127 CONTINUED:

NORMAN'S VOICE

The prime minister's office. Duby.
I don't want to upset them. This
was a mistake. He'll know I'm here.

We cut to a closer shot of Alex's grim face.

NORMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Please, I should really go. I
apologize. I respect you very much,
but I can't do this. This is
serious. I shouldn't have called
you.

ALEX

It is good that you called. And I'm
glad you are here. Please, sit
down. I want this conversation to
be straightforward and honest. Do
you think you can do that?

Cut to a shot of:

128 **ENDLESS, SILKY, DESERT MOUNTAINS AT SUNSET.**

128

NORMAN'S VOICE

I don't want to make things worse
for Eshel.

We see a FLASH OF ALEX sitting behind a desk in her office.

A129 **EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - NIGHT**

A129

On Norman's face. He stops walking. He can hardly breathe.
Rushed New Yorkers walking around him pay no attention to
him. Then a shot of:

129 **A CAMEL AND OLD CITY JERUSALEM IN THE BACK GROUND:**

129

ALEX'S VOICE

I've spent the last few months
trying to find out more about you.
Where you come from, what you do,
who your friends are... your
family... Your financial situation.

A FLASH of Alex offering a GLASS OF WATER toward the camera.
Then a shot of:

130 **HAPPY FARMERS HARVESTING RICH LAND, PICKING PERFECT ORANGES.**

ALEX'S VOICE

But what I've discovered is very
strange.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

130 CONTINUED:

ALEX'S VOICE (CONT'D)
Everybody seems to know who you
are. But nobody knows anything
about you. Even people who say they
have known you for years.

A FLASH of Alex in the office pulling out a FOLDER FULL OF
DOCUMENTS. Then a shot of:

131 UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY OF EXOTIC FISH AND COLORFUL CORAL. 131

ALEX'S VOICE
For instance, I wasn't able to
verify that you have a daughter, or
that you were ever married.
Were you? Do you have a daughter?

NORMAN'S VOICE
Why are you collecting information
about me?

132 INT. ALEX'S OFFICE 132

And now finally we see Alex in her office, in sync, speaking
directly to Norman.

Over her head, on the office walls, we see FRAMED PICTURES,
with images of the Israeli Tourism Ministry's version of
Middle Eastern bliss:

--THE FISH, --THE DEAD SEA, -- THE FARMERS, -- THE CAMEL-
they are all framed pictures hanging on the wall behind Alex.
Our focus changes to Alex's face.

ALEX
Because I think the kind of
relationship you've established
with the prime minister of Israel
is illegal. I think it is corrupt.

A133 INT. MEN'S CLOTHING BOUTIQUE - DAY A133

A shot of Eshel reflected in the mirrors of the fitting room
from the scene in the beginning of the film, as he tries on
the SUIT. Eshel exchanges a glance with Norman.

Norman is smiling, but by now we know him well enough to
sense a nervousness in his eyes and the itch around his neck.

WE HEAR THE SOUND OF A MOVING TRAIN, taking us to:

133 INT./EXT. TRAIN - NIGHT 133

We flash back to the scene on the train from Washington to
New York. Alex and Norman are reflected in the train window.
Their faces are lit by a passing light from outside the
moving train creating a strobing effect.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

Do you have a specific area of expertise? Can you explain to me how your business works? If it is not too complicated... I'm curious.

NORMAN

Have you ever played rummikub?

ALEX

Sure.

NORMAN

My mother used to hate playing with me, because I would mess up the board, break up existing sets and try to create new ones with whatever lousy pieces I had on my rack. Sometimes I'd mess it up so bad, there was no way to put everything back. My mother would go crazy. She'd say, if you don't have a specific, simple move, just pick up a tile and let the game continue to the next player. But usually, all I needed to finish my turn, is one little Joker. That's all you need. If you have the Joker, you can afford to take some risks. Somehow, with a Joker in your hand, all the tiles fall into place.

ALEX

I'm sorry. I still don't understand...

NORMAN

That's what I do. I'm the Joker. As soon as you put me in the game, things work out. Here, let me show you...

Norman refers to the yellow legal pad with the diagrams he had drawn for her. It takes us back to:

We see Alex's LEGAL PAD on the table with the diagrams and names that Norman wrote down on that train ride. Our view tilts up from the diagram to Alex's face.

ALEX

The unnamed New York businessman - You are that man, Norman. You are our witness.

NORMAN

No, I'm not.

A135 EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - NIGHT

A135

FLASH to Norman walking in the busy street. He closes his eyes and shakes his head, as if to block away what Alex is saying.

B135 INT. AIPAC CONVENTION HALL

B135

Norman is looking around at the forest of human encounters frozen in time. At once, everyone in the room TURNS TO LOOK DIRECTLY A HIM.

We see Norman, in a panic, clutch his EPIPEN.

C135 INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - DAY

C135

ALEX

We can subpoena you. You have no choice.

This does not come naturally for Alex, but she reaches out and touches Norman's trembling hand. Norman needs this gesture. He allows her to keep her fingers over his hand for a few seconds. By now, his face, his eyes, are EXTREMELY AGITATED.

NORMAN

I have to leave now. I'm sorry.

ALEX

You need to hear what I have to say. We are arranging an early deposition for you tomorrow. I can't force you to stay here now but...

Alex has an ENVELOPE in her free hand. She places it on the table in front of Norman. Norman pulls his hand away and gets up to leave.

ALEX (CONT'D)

This is your official notice...

NORMAN

Do they know it is me?

ALEX

Who?

NORMAN

Duby, Hanna... Eshel. Do they know it is me?

ALEX

If they don't already, they will soon.

NORMAN

What will they do to me?

(CONTINUED)

C135 CONTINUED:

ALEX
If you cooperate with us tomorrow.
If you testify and speak truthfully
about everything you've
experienced, we will protect you
from self incrimination. It will be
about him. Not about you.

There is an ITCH that Norman feels around his collar bone, he scratches it violently, without any awareness that he is doing this.

NORMAN
But what will Eshel do to me?

ALEX
They will try to convince the court
and the public that you are an
unreliable witness. That will most
likely be their defense.

Norman nods his head. Alex hands him the NOTICE.

Norman hesitates for a brief moment, then he takes the envelope. Right before he exits the room--

ALEX (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

Norman turns around and leaves.

D135 **EXT. PARK AVE. - NIGHT**

D135

Norman is standing on the median of Park Ave. in Midtown, looking down at the ENVELOPE. He is frozen stiff in the middle of one of the busiest spots in the world.

135 **INT. PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, CABINET ROOM - NIGHT - ISRAEL** 35

On Eshel's shocked face.

The camera pulls back to reveal Duby whispering into Eshel's ear, while Eshel is sitting at the center of a room, waiting for a cabinet meeting to begin.

We see Hanna standing near by, holding her phone in her fist.

Eshel wants to say something, but in this setting he can't say a word. He looks over at Duby. Duby steps back, out of the light. A SHADOW falls over Duby's face.

136 **BECAME SCENE A127**

136

137

A SERIES OF SKETCHES - SUPERIMPOSED:

137

Cartoons, caricatures - of Norman in relation to the prime minister, under the sound of DUBY's voice.

DUBY (V.O.)

Right now, very few people know who Norman Oppenheimer is, but in a few days everyone will want to. We have an opportunity to brand him...

First caricature: Norman is a rich uncle offering a lollipop to an innocent, child-like prime minister on a street corner.

DUBY (V.O.)

...To introduce him to the world in a way that will disqualify him as witness and at the same time paint the prime minister as an innocent victim.

Second caricature: Norman as a stray mutt latching onto the prime minister's leg as he tries to shake him off with an olive branch on his way up to receiving the Nobel peace prize.

DUBY (V.O.)

If our leader is a victim... We are all victims...

Third Caricature: Norman is the sore toe on the foot of an aching prime minister portrayed as Atlas with a globe weighing heavily on his shoulders.

ESHEL

How am I victim? We are too powerful to be victims...

DUBY (V.O.)

Never say that... It is not true.

Fourth caricature: A Cinderella-like situation. Norman, with a devious smirk on his face, trying to fit a shoe on Eshel's foot. Eshel appearing as a delicate, beautiful princess.

138

INT. PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE - NIGHT - ISRAEL

138

On Eshel's face sitting behind his desk. He looks devastated.

DUBY

You are Mr. Peace right now. The press will be on your side - Nobody wants to see our peace efforts go down the drain because of the fantasies of some Jewish *macher*. We need to portray him as a delusional name-dropper who has been sucking your blood for years.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

138 CONTINUED:

DUBY (CONT'D)
You need to say this in a clear
way, not only because it is
necessary, but because it is true.

Eshel exchanges a look with Hanna.

ESHEL
There must be another way. Norman
is a friend. A very generous
friend. I can't hurt him.

DUBY
It is not about you and him. It is
much bigger than whatever personal
feelings you might have right now.
And bigger than the pain it brings
on any one person.

Eshel is shaking his head, he needs more...

DUBY (CONT'D)
Norman Oppenheimer is a threat to
our national interests.
You need to treat him like you
would any other threat. This is not
your choice. It is your duty.

It sinks in.

SLOW DISSOLVE FROM ESHEL'S FACE TO NORMAN, STANDING AT:

139 **EXT. PARK AVE. - NIGHT**

139

Norman is standing on the median of Park Ave., waiting for
the LIGHT to change. He takes a deep breath.

He sees A MAN ON A BIKE in the middle of the street,
balancing himself on his bike with both feet on the pedals as
he waits for the light to change.

The biker is in his 40s, wearing a business suit, tie and a
helmet on his head. He is determined to stay on his bike for
the duration of the light without putting his feet down.

Norman's PHONE RINGS. He looks at the screen. It is PHILIP
COHEN.

140 **INT. PHILIP'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

140

Philip is on the phone. They are silent for a moment.
Finally.

NORMAN
I took your advice. I didn't go to
the meeting. I'm stepping back,
like you said.

(CONTINUED)

Philip doesn't know how to respond. Across from his desk, on a shelf, one of the many framed pictures we see of Philip with different sports celebrities and politicians, is a PICTURE OF ESHEL, PHILIP and NORMAN, taken at the Aipac convention. Finally--

PHILIP
I'm proud of you. Good move.

Another beat of silence.

PHILIP (CONT'D)
Are you there, Norman?

Norman's eyes are fixed on the BIKER as he skillfully maneuvers his body on the bike to keep from falling, without advancing into the busy intersection.

NORMAN
I'm here.

PHILIP
You okay?

NORMAN
I'm fine. I think my body is reacting to something I ate. I'll take a Benadryl. I'll be fine...

PHILIP
Good. Good. ...I wish I could be more helpful... but, I don't...

NORMAN
(cutting him off)
I'm a good swimmer, Philip. Don't worry. As long as my head is above water...

PHILIP
You are a good swimmer. That's for sure.

NORMAN
You have been a very big help, Philip. Thank you. I appreciate it. Thank you.

Philip is silent. He can hardly breathe. His face is red.

Norman hangs up.

Finally the LIGHT CHANGES and the biker pedals forward with the rest of the traffic. Norman hails a cab.

Norman exits the cab in front of the synagogue.

He tries to open the door to the synagogue but it is locked.

141 CONTINUED:

141

He RINGS THE BUZZER. There is no response.

142 **EXT. SYNAGOGUE ALLEY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS**

142

Norman walks around the building into the narrow alley where there is a decorative window into the main sanctuary.

Norman climbs on a garbage can and peeks through.

The sight of the dimly lit empty sanctuary is comforting for Norman, so he just stands there with his face pressed against the window. Then:

MAN'S VOICE

Can I help you?

Norman turns around. It is Rabbi Blumenthal.

NORMAN

Rabbi!

RABBI BLUMENTHAL

You! What are you doing here??

NORMAN

I need to talk to you.

RABBI BLUMENTHAL

You need to sign those escrow papers, that's what you need. Do you realize we are going to lose all our pledges if this anonymous donor doesn't come through, not to mention this building, and my job! Why aren't you answering my phone calls??

Norman, still standing on the garbage can, says nothing. Rabbi Blumenthal understands what Norman's silence means.

RABBI BLUMENTHAL (CONT'D)

Fuck!

NORMAN

I'm working on it.

RABBI BLUMENTHAL

Fuck!!

He kicks the garbage can. Norman falls to the ground!

Rabbi Blumenthal kicks one of the garbage bags right into Norman's face.

RABBI BLUMENTHAL (CONT'D)

I should have known. I should have known not to trust you. I should have known. It's my fault. What do I do now??

(CONTINUED)

Norman, on the ground, covered in garbage, just looks at him with nothing to say.

RABBI BLUMENTHAL (CONT'D)
Was there a donor? At any point?
Ever? Or did you just make him up?

NORMAN
I thought I had someone. And I
might still have him. But it is not
a sure thing...

They look at each other. When Norman finally tells the truth, there is something disarming about his demeanor.

RABBI BLUMENTHAL
Then why did you tell us you had a
donor? Why would you do that?

NORMAN
I don't know.

The rabbi shakes his head in despair and walks away.

Norman sits himself up and leans against the wall, removing pieces of PICKLED HERRING from his coat and face.

Then-- HIS PHONE RINGS!

Norman locates his phone and looks at his screen: ESHEL
PRIVATE CELL

Norman takes a deep breath.

INTERCUT WITH:

143 **EXT. ESHEL'S PRIVATE RESIDENCE - SUNRISE - ISRAEL**

143

Eshel, with his phone to his ear, is in his private garden. The sun is coming up.

Norman finally answers, but doesn't say a word.

ESHEL
Is that you, Norman?

SILENCE.

ESHEL (CONT'D)
Norman, are you there?

NORMAN
Is it safe for us to talk?

ESHEL
It probably isn't. But there is
something I need to tell you before
the lawyers and PR people take
over.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ESHEL (CONT'D)

And I am speaking to you now as Micha Eshel, not as the prime minister of Israel.

(he pauses)

I'm sorry. I'm sorry for what is about to happen to you. In the next couple of days you are going to hear me saying things that I don't really believe. Things about you. And it will hurt. It will hurt both of us. But the only reason I will be saying these things is because there are hundreds of thousands of lives at stake. The enemies of peace have decided to step all over you on their way to behead me. It is a terrible price to pay, but Norman, I can't let them win. We can't let them win.

SILENCE.

ESHEL (CONT'D)

Do you accept my apology, Norman?
Do you forgive me?

Norman looks up to the sliver of sky that can be seen through the two buildings on either side of the narrow alley.

ESHEL (CONT'D)

History is full of anonymous heroes who helped bring civilization to its greatest achievements. While I, Micha Eshel, am asking you for forgiveness from the bottom of my heart, the prime minister of Israel is eternally grateful to you for being one of those heroes. The day I walk up to that podium to sign the peace treaty, you will see a very specific expression on my face. Know that I will be thinking of you... Norman Oppenheimer.

There is a tense silence on both sides of the line. Finally:

NORMAN

I will never betray you.

ESHEL

I love you, Norman. Thank you.

Eshel hangs up.

He turns to face--

DUBY who has been standing on the other side of the garden all along.

They exchange a look that says - "It's done".

(CONTINUED)

143 CONTINUED:

143

Then Eshel takes his private phone and throws it into a small DECORATIVE FISH POND on his way back into the residence.

144 **EXT. ALLEY NEXT TO SYNAGOGUE - NIGHT**

144

Norman gets up and cleans himself from the garbage that is still stuck to his clothing.

He places the garbage cans back where they belong, before he walks away.

FADE OUT.

145 **EXT. MANHATTAN - EARLY MORNING**

145

A dramatic view of dense Manhattan rooftops before dawn.

The streets are still empty.

Norman crosses a deserted and freezing street into Central Park.

146 **EXT. CENTRAL PARK - BEFORE DAWN**

146

As in the first sequence of the film, this is the hour of the fanatics.

Norman is sitting on the same bench, watching them pass by in their futuristic winter sportswear.

He sees Bill Kavish finishing his run and finding a spot for his stretches.

Bill sees Norman. Norman approaches.

NORMAN
Good morning, Bill.

BILL
Why do you do this? Why do you
behave this way? Why can't anything
ever be simple with you?

NORMAN
Who says simple is good?

Bill looks at Norman. Strangely, Norman's answer is actually quite - simple.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
I have a business opportunity that
will interest Jo.

BILL
No, you don't. Whatever it is, it
is too small.

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN

But it's your job to listen to me anyway, isn't it?

BILL

Jo Wilf doesn't want to hear your name or see your face. Listening to you is not part of my job. No. Definitely not now, with your friend in trouble...

Norman nods his head, looks at Bill stretch his groin. He turns around and walks away. Then:

BILL (CONT'D)

Wait.

Norman stops.

BILL (CONT'D)

I'm listening.
Out of respect to my father. You knew him, didn't you?

Norman nods his head. But before any sentimentality settles in--

BILL (CONT'D)

What have you got?

NORMAN

If you knew with one hundred percent certainty that the witness who is threatening to topple down prime minister Eshel will never testify, would you know how to make money with that information?

Bill is intrigued.

BILL

Depends where and how I got the information and if I can verify it... You realize that you are not a very reliable source, right?

NORMAN

Put me in a room with Jo Wilf. I'll give him the certainty he needs.

Bill is hesitating.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Think about it. Do the numbers. Come up with something. You have till eight AM to call me. Otherwise, I take it to Arthur Taub.

BILL

What's your fee?

(CONTINUED)

146 CONTINUED:

NORMAN
If this works out, I want Jo Wilf
to donate seven million anonymously
to a charity of my choice.

Norman walks away.

147 **EXT. 7TH AVE. EARLY MORNING** 147

New York is waking up. Commuters are exiting the subway
stations, flooding the streets.

Shops are opening. Street vendors are setting up for the day.

Norman is strolling on the sidewalk, in a pace and world of
his own. For the first time in this film, he seems -
tranquil.

An innocent looking, perfectly standard NYC, (NUTS 4 NUTS)
NUT VENDOR enters Norman's POV.

It is a cold morning, the OWNER of the nut-stand, wrapped in
his puffy winter coat, engulfed in the roasting smoke,
acknowledges Norman who is looking down into the different
types of sugar coated nuts.

148 **EXT. 57TH ST. AND 7TH AVE - DAY** 148

We are outside the Brooklyn Diner on 57th St. Through one of
the windows we see Norman and Jo Wilf sitting across from
each other in a booth.

We can't hear them, but we see that while Norman is
explaining his idea, he is writing his usual diagrams on a
NAPKIN, names, numbers and a scheme of lines connecting them
all. At a certain point, he hands the napkin to Jo. Jo looks
at it. He seems impressed. They and shake hands.

149 **EXT. NUT STAND - DAY** 149

Norman points at the sugar coated, roasted peanuts.

The vendor scoops a bagful and hands Norman the warm paper
bag.

VENDOR
Two dollars.

150 **EXT. NEAR BRYANT PARK - DAY** 150

Norman is walking with the bag of nuts in his hand.

Before he enters Bryant Park, he pulls his EPIPEN out of his
pocket.

120.
150

150 CONTINUED:

He looks at the EpiPen for a brief moment before he - throws it into a WATER DRAIN by the entrance to the park.

151 **EXT. BRYANT PARK - DAY** 151

Norman enters the park.

He is looking for the perfect spot to sit.

We are close on his face, his eyes.

Norman finds a lone chair in one of the corners of this beautiful urban miracle - the closest thing Manhattan has to a town square.

He is surrounded by massive office buildings, the monumental grandeur of the Public Library, and a horde of busy New Yorkers all around him, paying absolutely no attention to the lonely man holding a bag of peanuts.

Norman opens the bag, pulls out a nut, puts it in his mouth.

FADE TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK: WE HEAR THE SOUND OF AN ORGAN. GRADUALLY A CHOIR JOINS IN WITH HARMONY AND BEAT...

152 **INT. WEDDING HALL - NIGHT** 152

Rabbi Blumenthal is officiating the marriage of Philip and a dolled up KOREAN GIRL. Philip's emotional parents are standing next to his new confused Korean in-laws as Rabbi Blumenthal places a GLASS by Philip's feet. Philip smashes the glass.

WEDDING CROWD
Mazaltov!

153 **EXT. HARVARD CAMPUS - DAY** 153

A YOUNG MAN is crossing the campus, entering one of the buildings.

154 **INT. HARVARD BUILDING - DAY** 154

The young man approaches the registration desk, hands over his ID.

A WOMAN goes over her lists to locate his name. Then...

WOMAN
Welcome to Harvard, Davidy Eshel!

(CONTINUED)

154 CONTINUED:

DAVIDY ESHEL
Thank you very much.
(with a wide smile)
It is good to be here.

155 **EXT. WHITE HOUSE, CROSS HALL - DAY** 155

The hall is set up with American, Palestinian and Israeli flags.

Bruce Schwartz is looking down at a beautiful ceremonial TABLE set up for a peace treaty signing with a satisfied expression on his face. .

156 **TV COVERAGE OF JO WILF'S DEAL:** 156

Over footage of images of massive gas drilling rigs in the Arctic Ocean, and pictures of Jo Wilf-

The HOST is explaining how Jo Wilf had over a billion dollars in a short position against the stock price of the Russian Gas Company which plummeted after it turned out Israel and Turkey signed an agreement to build a pipeline between the two countries even though all the experts were predicting Eshel would be impeached.

Jo Wilf is described as a geopolitical genius with a prophet-like ability to predict political trends.

A157 **INT./EXT. BUILDING LOBBY - DAY** A157

Alex is watching this report. Connecting all the dots, almost positive she understands Norman's role in Wilf's ability to predict the future...

157 **INT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY** 157

Stepping onto the long Cross Hall red carpet in the White House are - a pair of BRAND-NEW SHINY BLACK DRESS SHOES.

After a few steps on the carpet, the shoes stop.

A reverse angle reveals a MARINE CEREMONIAL GUARD AND A FESTIVE CROWD OF DIPLOMATES, DIGNITARIES AND JOURNALISTS waiting for a ceremony to begin.

Duby and Hanna are standing to the side of the frame, smiling anxiously.

On cue everyone begins to applaud.

We cut to an extreme close-up of Micha Eshel's face. He takes a deep breath, absorbing this rare, historic moment.

158 **INT. RABBI BLUMENTHAL'S SYNAGOGUE - DAY**

158

The camera is scanning the beautiful wood paneled synagogue. It is full of CONGREGANTS, some we recognize as members of the board.

And one Bill Kavish, sitting in the corner of the room.

The camera movement reveals the CANTORIAL CHOIR HARMONIZING A VERY SWEET VOICED CANTOR SINGING THIS PRAYER:

CANTOR

All those who faithfully occupy themselves with the needs of the community, may the holy one grant them their reward, remove from them all sickness, preserve them in good health, and forgive all their sins, may he bless and prosper their work, together with all Israel their brethren, and let us say, Amen.

159 **EXT. BRYANT PARK - DAY**

159

With the cantor and choir still in the background.

Norman is now alone in the park, on his chair.

Across from him, on the other side of the park, there is an ORGANIST accompanying the cantorial piece.

Norman recognizes the man playing the organ - it is Srul Katz, totally immersed in his music.

Norman gradually vanishes.

160 **BACK TO: RABBI BLUMENTHAL'S SYNAGOGUE**

160

The camera leaves the cantor and closes in on the MEMORIAL PLAQUES until it finally focuses on one specific, rather small plaque that reads: "ANONYMOUS"

--THE END--