

*Edits and comments by Reuven Ben-Shalom*

*Great story! I was truly concerned as all threats converged and was kept in suspense to the very end. It correctly captures the multitude of threats to Israel, and identifies Iran as the instigator and destabilizer – Israel's main rival.*

*Without much guidance, I allowed myself to freely comment, mainly when details deviated from what I thought would be realistic. Naturally, a story such as this does not have to be totally realistic, but there are many nuances which may seem awkward or wrong to those who know this filed.*

*I ask that my comments be viewed as constructive criticism aimed at contributing the writer of the novel.*

*Of course this is merely my personal perspective, based on my professional background.*

*Reuven.*

## A NOVEL ABOUT HAMAS

By Mike Evans

1. As the story begins, Iran is starting to **chaff** under new US sanctions, imposed by the new US president after he announced the US withdrawal from the nuclear deal reached during the Obama administration. Iran is not in as poor shape as before, but its leaders are incensed that the United States would withdraw from the nuclear agreement and re-impose sanctions. Various Iranian ministers and key generals from Iran's military have been called for a meeting with the Ayatollah—the Supreme Leader—to listen as he discusses the situation.

The Ayatollah says the Americans are attempting to strong-arm the world against us and they are creating a very dangerous moment for us. Historically, Israel has perceived us as their greatest enemy—the one nation in the Middle East with the will to destroy them. And they are correct. For a long time, Israel has been kept in check by American presidents who have restrained the Israelis from implementing their previously stated strategy of pre-emptive strikes. Now, with this new American president, they have perceived a shift to an American president whom they perceive as less inhibited in his support of them. They sense their moment is opening to them.

And that makes them very dangerous. Now, Israel thinks it can attack us with a devastating first strike, knowing a friendly American government will support their move. This is a very dangerous time for us. They might very well do this thing they have wanted to do for so long.

Someone says, they cannot conquer us with military might. They haven't the strength for an invasion. That much is correct, the Ayatollah acknowledges. But with American assistance, they can inflict great misery on us. Destroy our domestic economy. Set back our nuclear development program by decades. Many in the US would like to do just that.

Someone else says, many in the US also think if they inflict enough misery on us the masses will rise up in revolt, as they did against the Shah. And they might. Yes, the Ayatollah agrees again. They might. But we cannot allow that to happen. Allah will not allow it. He will not fail us. We cannot fail Him. I have called you here because this is a crucial moment for us. We must not cower or run from it, but rather turn this moment to our advantage. Their greatest advantage is also their greatest weakness. The Ayatollah looks over at the generals. Your task is to produce a plan that will turn this moment against the Israelis and give us the strategic advantage against them. Return to me in three days with a plan that will do that.

2. Three days later, the Iranian generals return to the Ayatollah with a plan. First General says, as you have indicated before, this is a moment given to us by Allah. But it is a moment for cunning, not brawn. Ayatollah asks, what do you have in mind?

Iranian generals present a plan. As a preliminary matter, we must pre-position additional troops in Lebanon. They will be necessary to prevent a ground assault by the Israelis against Hezbollah, which is a potential Israeli response to what is coming. Having them there will also give us additional options should events unfold in an unforeseeable manner.

At the same time, we will insert operatives from the Revolutionary Guard into Israel. Some will arrive by means of Russian ships that transfer oil to Israel through their arrangement with Eilat Ashkelon Pipeline Company (EAPC). We can place our operatives aboard those ships without

**Commented [R1]:** I don't think Iran would position "troops" in Lebanon. Rather they would support Hezbollah with additional funds and equipment. As for personnel – it could be militias of fighters under control of the revolutionary guard.

problem, two or three at a time so as not to raise suspicions. Perhaps some will even arrive as Orthodox Russian priests. We can work that out later. When the ships arrive to make their delivery at the port of Eilat, our operatives will be onboard, disguised as deckhands. They will alight from the ship and disappear into Israel. If we begin this part of the operation immediately, we can preposition dozens of operatives by the time we launch what is to follow. They will be very useful to us at that time.

**Commented [R2]:** Perhaps add that they will link up with Hamas operatives in the West Bank.

When all is ready, we will launch five simultaneous attacks by Hamas from Gaza against Israel's western border. These attacks will be disguised as Gaza protests and all will occur on the same day. A surge of thousands of people from Gaza moving toward each of the five border checkpoints. They will be instructed to cross the border at all costs. We shall make certain that women and children are at the front of those protest groups. And, we will make certain that international news agencies cover the events. We will create an air of tension surrounding these events and by these great surges of humanity, we will provoke IDF soldiers to shoot them at the border, as they did in previous protests. Only this time, the IDF will slaughter hundreds at each checkpoint. Thousands more will be injured at each checkpoint. Thus, the casualty count will be five times higher than before.

**Commented [R3]:** This is buying into a Palestinian agenda, as the riots and attacks were pre-planned and were carried out during a long period of time, not only around the relocation of the embassy.

The Iranian general is on a roll now. Outlining his proposals to the Ayatollah. At the same time, our operatives will facilitate a large protest by Israeli citizens—those who favor the cause of peace and freedom for our people—which will take place in Jerusalem. This will insure a large crowd in the city. On the day of the protest, we will infiltrate Jerusalem with children—perhaps a hundred or so, a group large enough to be effective but small enough to avoid raising suspicions. They will spread out among the public, particularly in the Old City where streets are narrower and more confined. Many of the children will carry backpack bombs that can be remotely detonated. Others will carry only backpacks. They will appear similar to the backpack bombers but they will not have bombs. Just backpacks. As the bombs are detonated around the city—some here—some there—more over here—then dozens more over there—the Israeli police will be provoked to take action. If we do this correctly, many of the policemen will react in fear and

apprehension and begin shooting at all children wearing backpacks, most of whom will be merely unarmed children with backpacks, not bombs.

Through our various contacts, we will make certain the international news agencies are present to broadcast all of this, in Gaza and in Jerusalem, to television networks and internet websites around the world. As the images of slaughtered and wounded women and children are replayed again and again, outrage will build among the citizens of the world. Sympathizers and politically liberal constituents in the West will make certain these news stories get repeated and that the dead children are not forgotten or overlooked.

The Iranian general continues, as outrage builds, our friends at the United Nations will call for sanctions against Israel. All members of the Security Council will agree, including Russia, but the United States will veto those sanctions. Then the world will be outraged and all of the nations will demand justice on behalf of the slain children. And instead of the United States bludgeoning the nations of the world to impose sanctions against us, the nations of the world will impose sanctions against the United States. The European Union, China, perhaps even Russia will see this as their moment to turn the tables on the Americans. China, in particular, would be glad for an opportunity to assert itself as the world's leading economic superpower. They will jump at the chance to impose the severest sanctions. Sanctions that amount to a virtual halt in trading with the US. Those sanctions will shock the American economy and knock America from its pedestal, leading to a collapse of the American economy.

When the American economy collapses from lack of international trade caused by the sanctions, its once mighty military will cease to exist. Then we will be free to destroy Israel, once and for all. There will be no one to stop us.

Commented [R4]: That's overdoing it.

The general bows. That, Supreme Leader, is the strategy we propose.

As they leave the meeting, the generals look at each other. Think he will approve it? Some do, some don't. And what if the strategy does not succeed? Someone says, it won't matter. Why

Not? We will all be dead. They chuckle but do not laugh. The top general says, relax. It will not come to that. And if it does? We always have the Mahdi option. They all nod in agreement. Yes. The Mahdi option.

3. The following day, the Ayatollah approves the plan proposed by the generals. Two days later, three Iranian operatives arrive at the port of Eilat aboard the *Barnaul*, a Russian tanker carrying oil for transit through Israel with delivery to European markets. As the ship unloads its cargo, the three Iranians disappear.

**Commented [R5]:** A large scale operation such as this cannot be put together and executed in two days. Best make it months.

4. An Iranian operative, traveling as a Qatar diplomat, enters Gaza. Meets with Hamas leadership. Tells them of the planned protests—not all of the details about how this fits into Iran’s ultimate goal, but that these will be the largest protests yet. The will of the Ayatollah as prescribed by Allah. Protests at all five border crossing checkpoints, all occurring at the same time, on the same day, all protesters attempting to cross into Israel. Women and children in front. Someone says, this will require more people than we’ve ever used before. Yes, the operative says. So you should begin now to prepare for it. Educate your people on how to do this. Get them ready. They know the objective is to cross the border. Show that we will not be confined to Gaza by a fence that imprisons us like criminals or slaves. You will not be able to gather the crowds we need at the last moment. Get organized. These protests must work.

**Commented [R6]:** It is, in fact, a fence.

5. Following the meeting with the Iranian operative, Abdullah Zoabi, a senior leader in Al-Qassam—the military side of Hamas—approaches Mohammed Hadawi, twenty-something, an up and coming member of Al-Qassam Brigades (EQB), the military wing of Hamas. Tells him they intend to stage the largest protests ever held in Gaza. Need to prepare for it. Hadawi says, we had large ones before. Yes, but we intend to protest with thousands at every border crossing. All five? Yes. All five. Thousands at each site. All protesting at the same time, on the same day. Hadawi is wide-eyed. That will require a lot of people. Yes. So you can see, we must get organized. We want you to organize the protest at the Sufa Crossing. Gather a group of people who can form a cadre. A group that can recruit the numbers you need. Perhaps, stage some protests to help get them ready, gather information about the crossing, and assess the IDF

**Commented [R7]:** I strongly suggest choosing a different name. The Zoabi family is a widespread family in Israel and Jordan. The name is immediately attached to them.

responses. We are always ready. Yes, but you will need thousands to join you this time. Not hundreds. Gathering a crowd of thousands takes time and it must be intentional. Zoabi gives him more detailed instruction about what is expected. Tells him, news cameras will be filming. The protest will be broadcast to the entire world. This must not fail.

6. Hadawi wants to succeed in leading the protest at the Sufa Crossing. In an effort to do that and to build a cadre of protesters who can incite a crowd of thousands to join them, Hadawi gathers a group of ten or twelve Hamas operatives about his own age. Men whom he knows and with whom he is familiar. They plan a series of protests designed to probe the nature of the **crossing** operation, IDF security, how close they can get before provoking a response. They also use these smaller protests to identify members of the **community** near the Sufa Crossing who will join them and expand their reach enough to gather the thousands they want to participate.

**Commented [R8]:** Best not call it border

**Commented [R9]:** Don't think this is relevant. No one lives right near the crossing.

7. In the first of his planned preliminary protests, Hadawi's group meet at a house they use as an organizing point, then climb into a pickup truck and drive toward the Sufa Crossing. The Sufa Crossing is a cargo crossing and several cargo trucks are stopped there waiting in line to cross the border. Hadawi and his men approach the border checkpoint in a pickup truck, drive past the waiting trucks. When their approach does not invoke an immediate response, men riding in back of the truck throw rocks and bottles at IDF soldiers guarding the border crossing. Several IDF soldiers respond with teargas and gunfire aimed in their direction but not intended to strike them. The protesters wheel the truck around and retreat.

8. Back at the house where they gathered, Hadawi realizes organizing a protest at the Sufa Crossing will not be easy. The immediate area around the checkpoint is agricultural, nothing but fields and farms. The nearest housing dense enough to provide people for a protest is more than a kilometer away. And even there, he won't find the thousands that he needs. To stage the protest envisioned by Hamas leadership, he will need to bus people to the border. Bussing thousands will be out of the question. We must incite them to come rather than invite them. No, someone replies. We will tell them to come and they will come. We will tell them it is their service to

Allah. They will respond. Hadawi is unconvinced and begins to think about how to motivate others to participate.

9. Farther north in Gaza, near the Erez Crossing, Khalil Farah is recruited to lead the protest there. He gathers a group of Hamas operatives and then begins a reconnaissance of the area from the Gaza side. Traveling as close to the border as possible by vehicle, then walking forward on foot. Checking, noting IDF strength, position, response. Then sketching the area from **memory**. Someone who **crosses** the border there to work at Yad Mordechai, a kibbutz just across the border, takes pictures and video with a cell phone as they cross. Farah and the operatives who have joined him huddle over the images, looking, studying, planning.

**Commented [R10]:** There is no need for this. He can freely take pictures.

**Commented [R11]:** Not realistic in today's situation. Workers do not cross. Best make this someone who crossed for medical treatment in Israel.

10. Operatives who are working with Farah as his core group in turn organize four or five groups each and tell them, we are staging the largest protest ever. The Ayatollah himself has ordained it. And not just a protest, we intend to cross into Israel and continue our **protest** on the other side. Someone says, some of us would die doing that. Yes, but others of us would make it across and whether we make it across the border or not, we will let the Israelis and the world know the true nature of our situation and the evil that we face here. You must join us in this work. Allah is with us. Unlike other crossing locations, this one is located much closer to Gaza residences. Gathering protesters in the thousands, as expected by Hamas leadership, is much easier. In fact, Farah has the opposite problem from Hadawi, that of building enthusiasm but restraining the protesters from protesting before the appointed time.

**Commented [R12]:** Their objective isn't to "protest" but to reclaim the land. Capture Israeli villages. Abduct Israeli soldiers as a bargaining chip.

11. Meanwhile, an Iranian advertising executive who lives and works in New York has lunch with a network news executive. They are friends and have worked together for a long time. Iranian steers the conversation around to Gaza. Somewhere in the conversation the Iranian says, sources tell me the people of Gaza plan protests at all five crossings. They anticipate huge crowds at each of them. News executive says, **could** Hamas really pull off something like that? Iranian says, Hamas can do anything it wants, but this isn't Hamas. It isn't? No. Who is it? This is the work of the residents of Gaza. They have demanded this protest themselves. That has never

**Commented [R13]:** After wide scale "protests" already happened, this all looks outdated.

happened before. No. It hasn't. You should look into it. Get ahead of the competition in breaking the coverage.

12. Over the next few weeks, protests at each of the checkpoints escalate in size and intensity. In southern Gaza, Hadawi goes to a cargo container he uses as storage. The container is located in an industrial sort of section. From the container Hadawi gets a dozen rockets. Puts them in the back of his pickup truck. Covers them with a tarp. Takes them to the house near the Sufa Crossing that he uses for gathering his group of operatives. Hamas operatives how were with him in the truck at the border before meet him there. Use the house and surrounding houses as a shield. Fire one of the rockets in the direction of the border crossing. Someone says, we don't know if it hit anything. Need someone to go closer and watch. Hadawi takes the pickup truck. Drives to within sight of the border crossing, parks the truck. Comes around to a clear view and lies flat on the ground. Calls one of the operatives on a cell phone. They fire a rocket. It lands to the left of the checkpoint. Another to the right. A third comes down on the road right in front of the checkpoint. Hadawi says, make the next one longer. This one lands on a truck stopped at the crossing. Explodes. The truck catches fire from the explosion. Hadawi, still on the phone, tells them it is enough. He crawls back to the truck, drives over to get the others.

Commented [R14]: ???

13. Meanwhile, Iranian operatives working in the southern district of Israel begin carefully recruiting Arab school teachers to their cause of organizing children to conduct a protest in Jerusalem. They are careful, work only with Arab teachers who have been completely radicalized, previously identified and vetted by Iran's intelligence agency. Looking for help in identifying about a hundred children they can use for the attack in Jerusalem.

Commented [R15]: Doesn't make sense to recruit Arab Israeli children as suicide bombers. This should be in the West Bank – Palestinians.

14. Other Iranian operatives make contact with liberal Israelis. Talking. Listening. They know a few of them, but are looking for more and for a cause they can use to organize a protest demonstration in Jerusalem. Something to attract a crowd. Soon learn they can stage a demonstration on any number of topics with a few hundred protesters, but getting a crowd any larger than that will be difficult. Not an issue capable of galvanizing liberals in huge numbers.



15. At the same time, other Iranian operatives contact known Arab sleepers living inside Israel who are trained as bomb makers. Sent there in the past to live, assume an unremarkable identity. Now, they are activated and set to work making bombs. Iranian operatives supply them with the money, items and things they need to do this.

16. Other Iranian operatives begin acquiring backpacks. Not difficult to do, but has to be done. Slowly gathering hundreds of backpacks.

17. Mossad operative in Syria notices arrival of new Iranian troops. Checks his contacts. Assure him it is merely cycling through of new troops to replace those who have been in the country.

18. Mossad operative observes, watches. Follows troops to barracks. Sees others loading trucks. Thinks maybe it is merely a turnover of troops. New ones in, old ones out. Continues to watch. Early in the morning, trucks begin to roll. Follows them. They go to the Lebanese border. Cross into Lebanon. Mossad agent signals his handlers about the movement.

19. Mossad analysts in Tel Aviv receive information from agents in Lebanon confirming the arrival of Iranian troops. Check the satellite images. Over several days, notice tents are erected at several Hezbollah training sites. Then notice new buildings being constructed at those sites. Analysts prepare a report and forward this to their supervisor.

20. Information about Iranian troops movements in Syria and Lebanon is included in the Israeli prime minister's daily security briefing. Discusses the situation with the Mossad director and defense minister. They are concerned about the introduction of Iranian troops into Lebanon. Always had advisers there but this appears to be an actual troop buildup. Construction of buildings appear to be barracks. Means they intend a long-term stay. We need to know more about what they are doing. Yes. I agree. We'll find out what's going on.

21. One of the locations for recruitment of Arabs for the attack in Jerusalem is the city of Rahat, an Arab city in southern Israel. An Iranian operative contacts Rashid Masalha, an Arab with no

obvious connections to Hamas, who lives in Rahat. Masalha teaches at an Islamic school in Rahat and knows people throughout the region. He recruits Israeli Arab children from Rahat as the nucleus for the planned action in Jerusalem. Masalha doesn't know all of the details about the proposed action but suspects this will be a violent incident. Keeps this to himself, doesn't talk about it to anyone. Instead, he tells the children and parents, many of whom are not radicalized, that he is organizing a field trip to Jerusalem. Can't guarantee it will be tension free, but we can't simply cower and wait while life passes us by. Going to see the sights and talk about history—the history of the region and the history of our people. That's all. Up and back in the same day. Arab parents of Masalha's students understand the nature of the outing but see nothing unusual about the proposed trip.

**Commented [R16]:** No big deal to take kids from Rahat to Jerusalem. Not sure this line holds.

22. In Gaza, Masud Darwaza, a Palestinian who is close to several members of Hamas but not a direct participant, lives in the southern end of the Gaza Strip in the area from which Hadawi is assigned to organize for the protest. Darwaza is not involved in that organizing effort but learns something of what is happening, asks around and learns that protests are being organized. Hears reports of new Iranian operatives in Gaza assisting with the protest efforts. Something big is in the making. People are beginning to talk. Word is spreading. The fact that Iranian operatives are in Gaza is nothing new, Iranian operatives work in Gaza constantly, but Darwaza senses this time things are different. Secretly, Darwaza is a spy, an Arab who lives in Gaza but who has been recruited by agents from Shin Bet, Israel's internal security agency. He meets with them or communicates with them when he crosses the border to work at a construction site in Beersheba.

**Commented [R17]:** Currently not realistic. Make it a business man who travels through Israel to Jordan.

23. After gathering information about what he thinks is a new operation, Darwaza signals his contact—Yaakov Diskin, a Shin Bet agent—that he needs to talk. Diskin is a former IDF Special Forces member. Entered Shin Bet, trained at several Mossad facilities, and with the CIA farm at Langley. Diskin and Darwaza exchange messages through an online message site. They contact by cell phone or laptop. A few days later, Diskin comes to the construction site disguised as an inspector. Tells the manager he needs to walk the site. Darwaza sees him. Comes over to him in a secluded spot. Darwaza tells him what he has seen and heard about the proposed protest and

**Commented [R18]:** Name of former ISA director. Best choose a different name.

**Commented [R19]:** Not realistic. This would be Shin Bet facilities.

**Commented [R20]:** Besides the fact that the construction site scenario isn't realistic, this would not be the method of meeting. Once in Israel Darwaza can be taken to a Shin Bet facility where they can speak in private.

about new Iranian operatives in Gaza. Diskin tells him that pictures of the Iranians would be very helpful and asks Darwaza to find out as much as he can.

24. A few days later, Darwaza sees a man he thinks is one of the Iranians talking to a man he knows is a Hamas operative. Darwaza takes pictures of him with his cell phone. Forwards those pictures to the messaging account that he and Diskin use to communicate.

25. Darwaza thinks he is being careful but someone saw him taking pictures of the Iranian. Someone reports that activity to one of Hadawi's men. When news of this reaches Hadawi, he decides to follow Darwaza and see for himself. Hadawi doesn't know Darwaza and can't tell from the things he has observed whether Darwaza is doing anything wrong. Doesn't want to take action on his own out of concern that Darwaza might actually be operating under someone in Hamas. So, he goes to see Abdullah Zoabi. Tells Zoabi what he has heard and seen about Darwaza. Asks if they know for certain the men who claim to be Iranian operatives really are Iranian operatives. Zoabi assures him the Iranians are legitimate. Leave this matter to me.

26. Zoabi is aware that some residents of Gaza are actually spying for Israel, many doing so for money, others for political reasons. Some of these Arab spies are known, and some are not. With this operation, however, Zoabi feels there isn't time for extensive vetting. He cannot afford a delay and he cannot afford any disruptions. So, rather than checking to find out the extent of Darwaza's connections, his contacts in Israel, or even confirming if he is engaged in espionage, he assigns his best operative to kill Darwaza.

**Commented [R21]:** Known to who? If they were known they would be dead.

27. Assassin goes to Darwaza's apartment. Observes him coming and going. Learns he lives alone. Enters Darwaza's apartment at night and strangles him while he is asleep in bed. After killing Darwaza, the assassin searches the apartment, finds two cell phones, documents, other information. Takes them and leaves.

28. The next day, Diskin—the agent from Shin Bet—checks the message account to see if there is anything new from Darwaza. Finds the pictures, but nothing else. Leaves a reply for Darwaza

asking how many other Iranians he has seen. Uploads the images to his account at the office and uses facial recognition software to scan for the man's identity. Later that afternoon, he learns that the person in question is Akbar Ansari. He was a student in Milan for a while. Most recently, arrested and released in Paris in connection with an investigation of a protest held outside the headquarters of Charlie Hebdo, the satirical weekly. Diskin studied the report, wonders if he should send Darwaza a message, ask for more information or for a meeting. Decides to wait. Thinks about it. Asks around the office, circulates the information among other agents, asks if anyone knows anything about Ansari or about any reports of new Iranian faces in the area.

29. As plans for the Hamas protest on the Gaza border move forward, Hadawi continues to wrestle with the logistical problem of how to get enough Palestinians to the Sufa checkpoint. At other times, operatives circulated information about a protest, then moved through a neighborhood on the appointed day announcing the protest and urging them to join. This time, however, the situation seems different. The distance, the need for great numbers, seems overwhelming. As he thinks about this and talks about it with some of his closest advisors, one of them mentions a book he read about American civil rights protests. Another mentions the protest in the US against the Vietnam War. These were highly organized events. They only seemed to be spontaneous. Hadawi says, that's what I've been telling you. That is exactly what we need to do. But how? We need a cause to rally them around. Something specific. Someone says, how about the ones the Israeli's killed at the border before. You've already mentioned that as the reason. I think that is enough. As they talk, they devise a scheme to promote the protest as one to "remember the dead children." Tell the people that the world already is forgetting what happened last time. Forgetting the people the Israelis killed and the bodies we buried. Going to march as a group to the border and into Israel so the world can see that we remember. Tell our people that they must not forget, and their children must not forget, and the world must not forget, and it is their duty to make certain none of them forget. They must join us for a protest march. They choose an assembly point. Assign areas to each member of the group.

30. Meanwhile, Zoabi reviews items retrieved by his assassin from Darwaza's apartment. Asks about disposing of the body. Taken care of. Looks through the phones. One of them still has the

**Commented [R22]:** This would not do it. Must be something more dramatic which garner widespread support. It could be a fabricated report that Israel plans to demolish part of the al-Aqsa mosque compound and build a synagogue there.

Iranian's photos. Checks for activity on the phone. Sees that it was used to communicate with an account. Asks the assassin if he recognizes the account. Does not. Tells him to find out.

31. The assassin returns a few days later and tells Zoabi the account in Darwaza's cell phone is for a Catch-Up messaging service. Like a message board only private. Limited to members allowed on it by a moderator, but even then people can arrange to communicate through sub-accounts that only the parties control. Where is this message board? It is operated by Goldwasser-Moses. The Israelis. Yes. My people tell me this is almost certainly an account used by one of the security services. Probably Shin Bet. Anyway to find out who Darwaza sent those pictures to? I doubt it. Anonymity is the reason these message services exist. But we have the phone. I suppose we could send a message. Ask for a meeting. Zoabi says, I think we have nothing to lose by trying.

32. Later that week, Diskin checks the message account and sees that Darwaza has left a new message, we need to talk. Diskin agrees and replies, making no mention of the location.

33. Assassin gets the message. Realizes Darwaza and his handler, if that is who the person really is, probably had a prearranged way of meeting. The next meeting arranged at the previous one. He researches Darwaza's life. Hacks the phone. Still can't figure out the location. Learns that he works on a construction site in Beersheba. Tells Zoabi what he has learned, but that he can't get over the border. They know me. Won't let me past the checkpoint.

34. Zoabi brings in another operative who regularly crosses the border. Assassin briefs him on what he knows. Zoabi sends the new operative away. Shoots the assassin so there are no loose ends. This attack must succeed.

35. The next day, Diskin goes to the construction site. Slips onto the site without identifying himself. Has a fake badge. Walks around as if he's supposed to be there. Waits. Checks his watch. Darwaza doesn't show. He leaves.

**Commented [R23]:** Would not be so obvious and easy to track.

36. Zoabi's new operative returns to Gaza. Has pictures of Diskin from the construction site. Says, I think this is the man who you are looking for. Sends the images to Zoabi. Later that evening, Zoabi shows the image to one of the Iranian operatives. He says, send this to me. I will have someone check on it.

37. A few evenings later, Diskin, who lives in Beersheba, has dinner with his wife and friends. A woman at dinner mentions seeing someone in the store a few days earlier who looked different. Then she heard him talk and heard an accent. She has a friend who is married to an Iranian and she is certain this guy was from Iran. Where did you see this mystery man? Tiv Ta'am. The grocery store? Yes. Someone says, people from everywhere live here now. It's not like the old days. High tech industries. Medical industries. That's what makes us great. That's what makes us vulnerable. And they all look the same. No. This man had sharper features. **His nose and the shape of his face.** Much sharper than the **typical Arab.** He was not from here. Is this really such a big deal? I don't know. He just seemed out of place. Maybe he just arrived here. Perhaps so. Diskin listens, but has little to say. His mind, however, was thinking of Dimona just a few kilometers away and the nuclear reactor located there. And of the hundreds of other softer targets terrorists might hit.

38. Later that evening at home, Diskin's wife mentions that he was quiet at dinner. He says, well, I couldn't very well talk. I work for the government. Don't they know that already? You said not to tell them. Good. Don't. Well, you can't have it both ways. He seems irritated. She says, what's the matter? He says, it's just that, they're talking about someone looking out of place and I know we have to be suspicious and alert, but it just seems like we're changing who we are. You don't think Israelis in the past were suspicious of new people? Yes. I suppose they were. And isn't it your job to be suspicious? That's what you're always telling me. Yes. It *is* my job, but it didn't sound so nice coming from her tonight at dinner. It doesn't always sound so nice coming from you, either. Wife looks away. He asks, what? Go on. Say it. Not about that, she says. **But I saw someone like that, too. Sharp features. Intense eyes. Different accent.** I wondered who he was and why he was here. Beersheba is an active place. And a big place, as far as Israeli towns go. Lot of people from other places come through here. She looks over at him.

**Commented [R24]:** Don't think we can someone "isn't from here" according to his features. And there are Iranian-Israeli Jews who speak Farsi. So the accent is nothing special.

**Commented [R25]:** Iranians are NOT Arabs.

**Commented [R26]:** No... absolutely unrealistic. How would she happen to see the same person?

**Commented [R27]:** This whole conversation about someone with different features doesn't sound right.

This is not your usual response. Well, I can't go off on a rant every time, can I? They stare at each other a moment, then burst out laughing. He kisses her. She pushes him over on the bed. They embrace. Start giggling. She says, shh. You'll wake the children. He says, they aren't children anymore. They're teenagers. They never sleep. I know, but they might come in here. They know better. She kisses him.

39. The next day, Diskin is curious about what he heard at dinner the night before, especially after his wife told him the same thing. And he's concerned about the Iranian he knows is in Gaza. And he's worried about Darwaza. In a move that might burn Darwaza as a contact, he sends someone to the construction site with a photo of Darwaza under the guise of checking on a Gaza resident who works in Israel. Asking about if he has reported to work. Supervisor says he hasn't been there in four days. The agent asks some of the co-workers. No one knows anything. As he is leaving, someone says they heard Darwaza was dead. No body found, but the apartment is empty and he hasn't been around. That's usually what happens when they make someone disappear. The agent returns to the Shi Bet office and tells Diskin what he has learned. Something big is coming, he says. I can feel it.

40. Diskin asks around the office. No one seems to know anything about reports of suspicious Iranians or something with Gaza or anything else unusually strange except Elon Harel, the youngest agent in the office. Harel tells him he has heard two other reports of new faces showing up at odd places. Both people reported the same description—sharp features and an accent. I ran a check through the foreign office. They don't have a record of any new foreign nationals arriving in the region. Diskin thinks for a moment then says, does Tiv Ta'am grocery store have security cameras? I don't know. Why? The person I heard talking about this said she saw someone in the store. Diskin starts toward the door. I'm going over there to find out. Harel says, I'm coming with you.

41. Diskin and Harel arrive at the grocery store. Ask the manager about security cameras. He shows them the equipment in the office. They begin reviewing the footage. Diskin doesn't see anyone who seems out of place but he finds footage of the woman who was talking at dinner the

**Commented [R28]:** Foreign nationals arrive all the time.

**Commented [R29]:** But you made an issue of his unique features.

night before. Gets a copy of several hours' worth in and around the time she would have been in the store. It's downloaded to a flash drive. He and Harel leave with it and go back to the office.

42. At the office, Diskin and Harel use facial-recognition software to scan the security camera footage from the grocery store for anyone in their database with a profile of interest. While that program is running, Diskin locates the woman who was with them at dinner the night before and brings her into the office. Now she knows where Diskin works and although she didn't know this before, she isn't surprised. She reviews the footage and **points out** the man she mentioned. Diskin isolates the image of him. Just then, Harel interrupts. Takes Diskin into the hall. We got a hit on a face in the store. Who is it? Harel shows Diskin the image of a man standing in line at the grocery store checkout. Diskin tells him the lady from dinner just picked that same guy out of the security footage. Diskin escorts the lady from the building, then returns to read the file Harel has located on the man from the grocery store. His name is Hossein Rajabian. Born in Tehran, Iran. Worked for several **firms** in Iran, none more recent than two years ago. Not in the foreign office system. So, he didn't come in through immigration? Right, or he came in and someone has masked that information from us. Does it say they've masked it? No. If they've blocked us from seeing a file, doesn't the system usually tell us we're blocked? Yes. So we can assume this guy isn't supposed to be here. We need to find him. Start looking.

**Commented [R30]:** She can point out someone that the others couldn't although he has unique features?

**Commented [R31]:** What firms? Profession?

43. While Harel researches Rajabian, Diskin calls an Arab contact in Umm Batin and arranges to meet him later that afternoon. This contact is not a member of any organization, works for a technology firm, has a wife and family. Simply another set of eyes and ears, but from a non-radicalized Arab perspective. Diskin arrives in Umm Batin and parks on a side street. A short while later, the door opens and the Arab contact takes a seat in the car. Diskin shows him a photograph from the grocery store security camera and asks if he's ever seen the man before. The Arab contact says, no. Diskin says, can you ask around? I need to know where he is. Contact says, do you have a name to go with it? Diskin tells him, Hossein Rajabian.

44. Harel doesn't have much success finding new information about Rajabian, but a few days later, Diskin's Arab contact from Umm Batin sends Diskin a text message. We need to talk.



Diskin once again drives over to Umm Batin and meets his Arab contact on a side street. The Arab contact tells him the person he was asking about is staying somewhere in Beersheba. He's not sure, but the guy has been meeting with a man named Rashid Masalha, a teacher at a school in Rahat. Shows Diskin a picture of Masalha. What school? The Arab contact tells him the name of the school. It is the same school that the contact's children attend. Diskin looks at the photo again. Says, this was taken really close. You know him? Yes. How? It's a long story. Masalha is an Arab, but he is also an Israeli citizen. Born here. Contact is not sure of his past, just that he is a teacher at Rahat. Diskin says, send me the photo. The Arab Contact sends him the photo. The Arab contact says, there's one more thing. What? Sources suggest Rajabian is a member of the Revolutionary Guard. Diskin frowns. What sources? Arab shrugs. You have your sources. I have mine. And that is what they are telling me.

45. Diskin goes to his office in Beersheba, uses Shin Bet's computer system to see what they have on Masalha. Quickly finds that they have only his name and basic information—record of his birth, education, and current job. Diskin isn't satisfied. Keeps at it. Muttering to himself, this is exactly the kind of person who poses the greatest threat—someone who is unknown, has no history of anything, yet poses citizenship papers, and goes about his life in a way that raises no flags. Realizes what he's thinking makes everyone a suspect but being suspicious is the nature of his job—might not be a way to govern but it's what he's assigned to do—so he keeps searching for information.

46. The next day, with still no new information on Rajabian or Masalha, Diskin turns to old-fashioned methods. Goes to Rahat. Parks outside the school where Masalha teaches. Uses the picture from his Arab contact to identify Masalha. Observes Masalha outside the school building. Takes a few photographs of Masalha, the parents he greets, others that he talks to before Masalha goes inside to start his day. Diskin's camera is internet compatible. Uploads the photos to his office email account from his car.

**Commented [R32]:** No need to mention. No big deal.

47. In accordance with the prime minister's earlier directive, Mossad director orders a major intelligence operation against the Iran military to find out more about recent Iranian troop

movements into Syria and Lebanon. Mossad operatives in Iran tap phone lines. Bug rooms. Technicians on the ground and in Tel Aviv infiltrate Iranian computer systems. Listen to phone calls, read emails of top Iranian generals, government officials.

48. Mossad analysts review the new data and determine that Iran is involved in a major operation in Gaza. Iranian troop movements in Syria and Lebanon are related to that Gaza action but exactly what that means is not yet clear. The operation also involves the introduction of Iranian operatives into Israel, Gaza, West Bank. Mossad analysts reading the data, learn many of those Iranian operatives already are deployed to Israel. The data gives them operational specifics about troop movements, strength, and armaments, but no operational specifics about the Iranian operatives in Israel or the action apparently planned for Gaza. Analysts say, given what we know so far, I'd say the operatives have been given general directions and objectives but the specifics of how to accomplish their goals has been left to their discretion.

49. Mossad analyst supervisors brief Mossad director. Afterwards, Mossad director meets with Shin Bet director and briefs him on the details, especially about the Iranian operatives they've learned are working inside Israel. Shin Bet director says, this is an act of war. Yes. It is. What are we planning to do about it? That depends on what the prime minister decides. You haven't briefed him yet? I go there next, but I wanted you to know what we know. He will decide what we do as a nation and how we respond, but you don't need his direction to act. Your mandate is already defined by statute.

50. As soon as the Mossad director leaves, the Shin Bet director convenes a meeting with his supervisors. They have suspected that something was afoot in Gaza, but have no hard evidence of anything in particular. Devise a plan to step up intelligence gathering. Search for the Iranian operatives. This will be difficult. We are a sea of ethnic diversity.

51. Diskin's supervisor calls a meeting of his agents at the office in Beersheba to discuss the situation. Briefs them on the information he has learned from Mossad. Other Shin Bet agents indicate they have heard rumors from their contacts—men believed to be Iranian, new faces,

something big planned in Gaza. Shin Bet supervisor turns their attention to it in earnest and coordinates their surveillance operations. Informants for other agents tell them they think whatever is planned will be civil in nature. Merely a protest. Shin Bet agents doubt it. Arabs have never simply protested. It always turns violent. We need to find out who is behind this. Diskin tells them about Rajabian and Masalha and asks if anyone knows anything about either of them. Shows them photographs from the grocery store security cameras and images he took of Masalha at the Arab school in Rahat. We have very little on either of them. We need to know more. Supervisor offers to request information from the FBI database and from Interpol but says it will take some time to get a response.

52. Meanwhile, Mossad director meets with the prime minister. Briefs him on what they know from the intercepted data retrieved from Iran. Information confirms what operatives told them, that Iranian military units are being positioned in Syria and Lebanon. Strengthening their position in both locations. Iranian agents, infiltrating Israel's borders, operating in Gaza and in Israel. Infiltration of agents is ongoing. Planning a major operation in Gaza. Prime minister is shocked, angry. We should strike them now. Who? Iran. We should hit them now and hit them hard. But we would be attacking them indiscriminately. Prime minister waves him off. I know. I know. Do we know where the agents are? No. We haven't even identified them yet. We just know they are here and more are coming. And they've moved units from the army. Yes. Into Syria and Lebanon. Enough to invade? No. Not quite. Just enough to keep us from attacking either location. Yes. Why? We're not sure. We're not certain about a lot of things, Mr. Prime Minister. It's a fluid situation. What do you recommend? I recommend we sit tight. Do nothing in the way of overt response yet. I've briefed the director of Shin Bet on the latest information. We should give them time to do their work. If we take action now, we'll only tip the Iranians that we know about them and we still won't be able to take down their entire operation. Prime minister says, very well. You'll monitor the Iranians for further information? Yes, sir. Always. Good. I'll talk to Shin Bet director.

53. Over the next few days, Shin Bet agents learn more about the supposed action in Gaza. Learn the identity of Hamas agents organizing the protests, including Hadawi. A vetting of them

**Commented [R33]:** Exaggeration. PM gets troubling intel all the time.

**Commented [R34]:** Says who?

**Commented [R35]:** No one would propose an indiscriminate attack.

shows they are all up and coming Hamas leaders, though still in the rank and file. Shin Bet agents are briefed on the latest information. Diskin is adamant. I don't doubt that there are Arab residents of Israel who would be interested in merely marching, but the rumors we are hearing are about protests coming from Gaza. This is Hamas we are dealing with and Hamas has never staged a mere protest march. There's more to this than we know. We just haven't figured it out yet. Supervisor tells them, I agree. There's more to this than you've uncovered yet. Keep digging. Find out the rest of the story. Get to the bottom of it.

54. Diskin still can't locate the Iranian operatives he has identified, but he knows where Masalha, the teacher at the Arab school in Rahat lives. Gathers some electronic devices, with his laptop. Tells his supervisor he is going to Rahat to follow Masalha. This is the only lead I have and I'm running it to the ground, one way or the other. Supervisor says he can't do it by himself. I'll get you some help. Okay. Give me Harel. Supervisor says, are you sure? He's young. Yes, but I've worked with him a little. He has potential—and he's not married, so he has time to do this sort of thing. Supervisor assigns Harel to help. Diskin gives Harel the location information for Masalha, tells Harel to be ready to take over surveillance that night. Harel says the technique seems a little antiquated. We could hover a drone over his house. Diskin says that might work for some things, but not at night. The neighborhood is too quiet. Someone would notice. Harel points out that Masalha lives in Rahat, an Arab city. Diskin is Jewish. He'll be just as obvious. Diskin says, just be there when I call you and leaves the office.

55. A few days later, Masalha leaves school in the afternoon, goes to a remote area in Rahat where he meets with Hossein Rajabian, the Iranian from the grocery store security tape. Diskin, who still is following Masalha, sees Masalha and the Iranian together. Takes photographs. Uses a long distance microphone to listen to their conversation. Records the conversation on his laptop. Masalha tells Rajabian that the parents are growing impatient. This work has reached a peak. Need a date for the event in order to keep them all together. You told them this was a field trip? Yeah. I told them we were going up to Jerusalem to see some historic sites. That we would be up and back in a single day. That's all? Yes. That's all. No hint of anything else? No. I can't give you a date yet. We're having a little difficult with a few other things. All of this has to happen at

**Commented [R36]:** He would not be doing this. Only in the movies the same guys do everything. This would be a different team.

**Commented [R37]:** No. still need cameras and microphones inside. Drone does not replace this.

**Commented [R38]:** Drones operate day and night. No difference.

**Commented [R39]:**

the same time. So, wait and I will get back to you. What do I tell the children and the parents? Tell them we checked with the city and there are a couple of events planned already. They will get back to you with a good date for the trip. Rajabian leaves. Masalha drives away. Diskin lays aside the microphone and follows Masalha to his home. Sees Harel parked down the street. Catches his eye as he drives past. Harel responds with a nod as he takes over the tail for the evening.

56. At the office the next day, Diskin shows his supervisor the photos of Masalha and Rajabian from the evening before. Plays the audio file of their conversation. Supervisor and Diskin discuss what it means. Something big is coming in Gaza. And something big is coming for Jerusalem. And it's tied to kids from that school and a day-trip they plan to take into the city. Yeah. But what is it? I don't know. Diskin asks his supervisor if they have heard anything from Interpol or the FBI. Supervisor says no. Diskin returns to his office. Calls a friend at Interpol. Tells him what he needs. The friend says they already have a request from his supervisor. Diskin asks him to hurry it up. The friend says they can't respond on the Iranian. The Russians have a hold on the information. Diskin says he needs it. Friend says, not much I can do about it. Diskin is frustrated but says, what about the other guy? **Masalha**. I need whatever you have on him. We have a situation developing here. I'll get it to you as soon as I can.

**Commented [R40]:** Why would they have anything on him?

57. After hearing the audio file of Masalha's conversation with Rajabian, the Shin Bet supervisor briefs the Shin Bet director. When the briefing concludes, the director notifies the analyst section and sends them copies of the information for review, then contacts the Mossad director, arranges a meeting, and briefs him on the conversation they recorded and the mention of action in Jerusalem. This is bigger than we thought. Yes, it is. Have your analysts reviewed this? They are doing that now. Think yours should work on it, too? Yes. I'll get them started. When do we brief the prime minister? Not just yet. We don't know enough details to bring him into it yet. And apparently from the conversation whatever they're planning isn't going to happen immediately. Right. So, let's take the time to work this up. You get your teams results. I'll get mine and we'll compare them. Then we'll brief the prime minister. Shin Bet director thinks this is the right thing to do but he leaves the meeting a little concerned that the Mossad

director might go cut him out of the presentation to the prime minister. Pushes the concern aside. Focuses on the work ahead.

58. A few days later, an explosion rips through a house near Jerusalem. Yaakov Diskin and a team of Shin Bet agents investigate and discover the remains of a man and the remnants of a bomb making operation. Neighbors describe not just a single blast but three. From evidence at the scene, it appears the dead man was a bomb maker, that he was killed in the explosion, and that he had already prepared six bombs. Three of them detonated. Three remain on a work bench on the opposite side of the room from the explosion.

59. Shin Bet agents collect boxes of documents and items from the house. Take it back to the office. While combing through the material they find documents about the size limitations for the bomb. A laptop recovered from the house has been damaged but technicians work with it, then call investigators down to examine the contents. Discover files with emails, other information. Written in non-suspicious language but analysts say the parties were discussing the necessity of having the bombs detonate remotely. Maps of the old city in Jerusalem.

60. Shin Bet supervisor briefs Shin Bet director. Director notifies Mossad director. They review that information with the latest updated intercepts from Iran. Looks like the action in Gaza is planned for all five crossing points. Mass rally. And now Jerusalem with bombs. As if the protests at the Gaza border are a diversion and the real attack is in Jerusalem. Mossad director says, we should brief the prime minister. Shin Bet director suggests they brief **IDF commander** first and bring him in on the work they've done.

**Commented [R41]:** IDF would have been on board by now. Information flows through work channels, not straight to the commander.

61. After briefing the IDF commander, the Mossad director, Shin Bet Director, and IDF commander brief the prime minister on the latest information on Iranian troop movements, additional information intercepted from Iran, the bomb maker near Jerusalem, the details about the bomb, Masalha and the meeting with Rajabian, the planned outing for Masalha's students, and what now appears to be protests at all five Gaza border crossings in conjunction with a bomb attack in Jerusalem, probably using children to deliver the bombs in **back packs**. Prime minister

**Commented [R42]:** When was this bit of information revealed?

says, we have to act. We can't wait any longer. Orders Shin Bet and IDF to conduct a search and arrest operation in and around Rahat, the Gaza border, and the entire southern region of Israel. Round up all known terrorist operatives, sympathizers, people with known connections to Hamas, Hezbollah, and all of the others. The Iranians will know we know. I understand, but we can't wait any longer. We can't wait for them to attack. We know about the threat. We have to do what we can to eliminate it even if we only disrupt it.

**Commented [R43]:** No such thing. You search specific locations.

62. Shin Bet brings in extra agents from another area to help with manpower for the investigation and the sweep of the southern region ordered by the prime minister. Diskin is good friends with one of the new agents. Diskin invites him to his office, briefs him on what he has found so far. Gives him the information he has about Rashid Masalha—and about the meeting Masalha had with Hossein Rajabian. Shows him pictures of both men. Asks what he thinks. New agent studies the images a moment, then says I think this Masalha fellow looks familiar. Remembers investigating him several years earlier regarding an incident in Jerusalem but didn't find anything incriminating. Has a file on the guy he investigated. They pull it up on the agent's laptop. A picture appears. Diskin says, that's him, but I didn't find him in the system. Why isn't he in there? That's because I entered him under the information we had about him at the time. Points to the screen. He used the name Rashid Kashua. Sometimes, Ibrahim Kashua. We didn't know him as Rashid Masalha.

63. Supervisor finds new agent and Diskin talking, sends him to work on the bomb maker case. Wants Diskin on it, too. Take your pick—bomb maker or this southern sweep we're preparing. Diskin tells supervisor the information he learned from new agent and says he wants to stay with Masalha. They have plenty of people on the bomb maker. And as far as this sweep goes, we have to get to the bottom of this and we won't do it by some indiscriminant search and arrest operation. Supervisor says, this was ordered by the prime minister. Diskin is beside himself. Says, I don't care who ordered it. I have work to do on this. Important work. And I'm not participating in these other things. They glare at each other, step back, take a deep breath. Diskin says, look. These people—Iranian operatives, Hamas operatives—they might be crazy but they aren't stupid. And they don't come up with plans like this on the spur of the moment. When they

**Commented [R44]:** Don't think he would say that. They are sophisticated and dedicated professionals.

do this kind of thing, it's always with a view toward the long term. They've been working on this for a while and they've involved a lot of people. We can crack this thing wide open but not by searching houses and rounding up the usual suspects. We have to work smart and we have to stay on task. Supervisor says, okay. Keep at it.

64. When supervisor is gone, Diskin re-checks the Shin Bet computer system and confirms that most of the information in the file is in the system. His real name is Ibrahim Kashua, but the system hasn't been updated to connect him with Rashid Masalha—the name Diskin knows him by. From this new information, Diskin learns that Masalha attended school in London where he was friends with someone named Emile Shammass. There is no information and Shammass' last known address is in Paris. That address is old and when Diskin checks he learns that Shammass no longer lives there and the apartment has been re-leased several times since. Still, Diskin senses trouble. Focuses on Masalha and his relationship to Shammass.

65. An hour or two later, Diskin receives an email from his friend at Interpol. A single file is attached. From the file he learns that Rashid Masalha's real name is Ibrahim Kashua. He already knows this. The file tells him that Masalha attended school in London where he was friends with Emile Shammass. Diskin knows that, too. Then he sees an entry that tells him Shammass is the cousin of Mohammed Hadawi, a known member of Al-Qassam. Diskin pounds the desk with his fist. Now we have a connection! Addresses in the Interpol file indicate that Shammass lived in Paris for a while but now resides in Nicosia, Cyprus. The file includes photographs of Shammass. Diskin, in a rush, gathers his laptop, a few other things from his desk, stuffs them in a satchel. Looks for supervisor. He's out. Finds Harel, says tell supervisor I'm going to Cyprus. I'll call later. Diskin leaves immediately.

66. Diskin arrives at Nicosia, Cyprus. Finds a hotel. Checks in under an assumed name. Uses false identification documents. Locates Emile Shammass' apartment. Finds a place from which he can conduct surveillance. Watches the apartment. Notes Shammass' schedule. Returns the next day. Does the same thing. Confident that Shammass' follows a similar routine each day, he goes back the following day. When Shammass leaves the apartment, Diskin picks the lock and goes

**Commented [R45]:** Again – like in the movies... one agent does it all. Doesn't work that way. Anyway – Shin Bet agents don't work abroad, Mossad do.



inside. Finds a laptop. Trolls through some of the files. Downloads the hard drive onto a flash drive. Then searches through the apartment—bookshelves, drawers, closets. Finds receipts from several places, then finds a scrap of something that tells him Shammas has been to Lebanon. Checks his watch. He’s been in the apartment several hours. Decides to leave. Slips out. Walks away. Sees Shammas returning. He’s early. Diskin wonders if he’s been seen.

67. Back at the hotel, Diskin inserts the flash drive into his laptop. Opens several of the files. Nothing much. Then opens one that includes copies of emails Shammas has received from an account identified only by numbers. The messages are instructions about someone to contact in Jerusalem. Diskin sends an email to his office in Beersheba asking someone to identify the account and the server. He continues trolling through the laptop. Finds information on the laptop about ways to manufacture and use Sarin. Articles about the instability of the final product and limits to its shelf life. Ways to transport small quantities of the components as an alternate way of addressing those issues and extending the gas’ shelf life. Several diagrams of easy-to-assemble methods for combining the components to make the gas. And then he finds a photograph of Shammas with Hadawi. Diskin recognizes the background. Knows the photo was taken in Lebanon. Recently. Hadawi in Lebanon—with Shammas—and something to do with Sarin. Wishing he had the Shammas’ laptop now. He could return to the apartment, take the laptop like he should have done before, and bring it back to Beersheba.

68. Diskin goes to a café to eat. While he’s there, he receives a text message telling him the email account is registered to an address in Jerusalem. No further information available. The connection of things bothers Diskin. Not any real, actual connection but just the mention of those things together—Shammas, Hadawi, Lebanon, Sarin, Jerusalem—bothers him and he thinks they may all be about the same thing, though he doesn’t know exactly what or how. And are those things connected to the Arab protest that’s planned for Sderot? Tells himself he worries too much. Tells himself again that’s what he gets paid to do. Decides he has to go back to Shammas’ apartment and get the laptop.

**Commented [R46]:** He cloned the entire laptop. No problem.  
And – no reason to take laptop – which will expose that he’s being followed. Just copy it and don’t leave a trace.

**Commented [R47]:** Since when are email accounts “registered” to an address?

**Commented [R48]:** First time mentioned -- ??

**Commented [R49]:** Makes sense. Why would he think he worries too much?

**Commented [R50]:** This would not be what he thinks. It would be: “Tells himself that even if there’s a 1 to 1,000 chance this is a real threat – he must investigate for so much is at stake.”

69. Diskin leaves the café and returns to Shammas' apartment. When he arrives he sees two men approaching the front door. Waits. The door opens. Shammas appears, lets them inside. Diskin takes pictures with his phone. Waits. Later that day, the two men leave the apartment. Then Shammas leaves. Diskin goes inside the apartment. Gets the laptop. As he is leaving, Shammas appears. They fight. Shammas is killed. A neighbor sees the fight. Shouts at Diskin as he leaves. Calls to another neighbor for them to call the police. Rushes to see about Shammas. Diskin flees.

70. Diskin hurries back to the hotel. Gets his laptop and other belongings. Shoves all of it with Shammas' laptop into the satchel. Goes downstairs, checks out of the hotel. As he leaves the front desk of the hotel, he sees one of the guys from Shammas' apartment standing on the far side of the hotel lobby. Now Diskin is worried about his own safety. Less concerned about security. Hurries out to the street. Uses his cell phone to call the office. Talks to Elon Harel, the agent helping him, while he walks. Tells Harel there's a problem. Thinks the people Arab protest in Sderot may be a ruse. A diversion. For what? An attack in Jerusalem. Why? I don't have it all yet, but I think they plan to attack there and they intend to use Sarin. Who? Mohammad Hadawi. You have— Check for him in the system. And his cousin, Emile Shammas. Shammas was helping. Rashid Masalha, too. He's the guy in Rahat. Yes. They're all connected. Hack into that email account I sent you and see what you can find. I gotta go. Are you okay? No. I'm in trouble. Get me a ride home. Preplanned code word—a request for an emergency extraction. Then Diskin ends the call. Shoves the phone in his pocket. Jumps into a taxi. Take me to the airport. As they arrive at the airport, Diskin sees the police have established checkpoints. Traffic is slow. Tells the driver to take him to Kyrenia, a coastal town, instead. The driver balks. Too far. Diskin hands him a wad of cash. The driver says okay.

71. Diskin arrives in Kyrenia. Has the taxi driver drop him off at Café Chimera near the harbor. Sends a text message to Joel Harel with the single word, Kyrenia. A few minutes later, Harel replies, *Achilleas*. Diskin doesn't know what this means but uses his smart phone to Google the word. Sees it is the name of a ship. Sailing that day for Haifa. A combination freight and passenger ship. Roll on/roll off freight. Trucks and cars mostly. He goes to the port. Asks at the

**Commented [R51]:** Why would he waste time checking out?

**Commented [R52]:** Now? He is already in trouble and he knows it.

**Commented [R53]:** People Arab?

**Commented [R54]:** Sderot...?

**Commented [R55]:** Now you tell me??

**Commented [R56]:** Wasn't he ELON?

agent's office. They hand him his tickets and room assignment. He boards the ship. When the ship is out at sea, a helicopter arrives and picks up Diskin.

**Commented [R57]:** If he's safely aboard – this would not happen. No reason to expose him.

72. When Diskin arrives back at the office in Beersheba, he tells supervisor what happened on Cyprus and what he found. Supervisor sends Shammass' laptop to the technicians for examination and sends Diskin home to rest.

73. Diskin goes home to see his wife and family. Can't explain where he's been but she smells him and knows he hasn't been seeing anyone. Sends him to the shower. He eats. She tells him he should rest. He says he can't, has to go to the office. She kisses him again. Coaxes him toward the bedroom.

74. Meanwhile, prime minister instructs Mossad director to brief his US counterpart on the terrorist/suspicious person sweep. A Mossad official travels to Washington and meets his US intelligence counterpart. Briefs him on the sweep to keep the Americans up to date and to request their participation in vetting suspects.

75. Information from the Mossad briefing for the US intelligence official, along with the request for assistance, is forwarded up the chain of command and is included in the US president's daily intelligence brief. President orders the intelligence agencies to confirm the reports of Iranian troop movements into Syria and Lebanon. After the briefing ends, the president tells his chief of staff to instruct the various intelligence and law enforcement agencies to coordinate with their Israeli counterparts. Give them what they need. The president's chief of staff agrees but suggests that the president should telephone the Israeli prime minister and offer the usual US assistance directly to the prime minister, rather than merely having the intelligence agencies coordinate—intelligence, special weapons and equipment they might need, and the like. President says, that's a good idea.

76. US president and Israeli prime minister talk by phone. Prime minister is blunt and straight forward. This is an attack against us by the Iranians. They have strengthened their position in

Syria. Moved top line troops into Lebanon. And they have infiltrated our country with agents. Not mere religious radicals but actual Iranian intelligence operatives who are planning a very large and extensive action against us. I know you've had protests before but is this— No, Mr. President. This isn't just another protest. This is a military action perpetrated against us by the government of Iran. What do they plan to do? So far, we know they plan major demonstrations at all five of the border checkpoints. And they are planning a major wave of bomb attacks against Jerusalem. Probably using children to deliver the bombs. Children? Yes, Mr. President. That's outrageous. Yes. To say the least. What do you want to do about it? My first reaction is to bomb Tehran but that won't address the threat we face. We should have your defense people talk with ours. See if we have any capabilities we can lend to the effort. That would be welcome, Mr. President. I'll see that our officials cooperate fully.

**Commented [R58]:** I don't think this would be his reaction.

77. When the call with the prime minister ends, the president summons the secretary of defense to the White House. They talk about the situation in Israel. This appears to be the work of the Iranian government. I've tried to convince the world that Iran is a serious threat but no one will believe me. Secretary says, I believe you. What do you think we should do? We should confirm those troop movements. I've directed the intelligence agencies to do that. Then I think we should reposition a carrier group to the Mediterranean and move an air group to our forward base in Italy. They have refueling capability. Gives us the ability to strike anywhere in the region. Anything else? We should move the carrier group in the Indian Ocean up to the Persian Gulf. President agrees. So ordered.

**Commented [R59]:** Sounds like a child complaining... and also not true. It isn't that the world does not understand Iran is a threat, only that they differ in understanding the magnitude of the threat and on how to cope with it.

**Commented [R60]:** I see no relevance to the arena, or the scenario.

78. The Israeli sweep of known terrorists, Hamas sympathizers, non-citizens living in Israel who are from Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Iraq, quickly becomes a very large operation but it goes off quickly, too, and without much of a problem. Hundreds of known terrorist sympathizers are located, questioned, detained. This operation yields the identity and location of a dozen new terrorist operatives. They are detained and interrogated as well. Documents are seized. Weapons caches are seized. Two previously unknown border tunnels are found. But no knew bomb making facilities are uncovered and no links to any are found.

**Commented [R61]:** Non-Israelis from these places aren't here.

79. After the border area operation ends, extra units from IDF and additional operatives from Shin Bet remain in the area in anticipation of the protests. Security at the border crossings is re-doubled and IDF troops begin training for a response to various border incident scenarios. Under the guise of a periodic review, IDF brings in a consultant from the Paris police department—one of the best crowd control units in the world—to review their plans, give new ideas about creative ways to pre-empt threats. Actually, the supposed review is a cover for an even deeper secret. The Paris police official is accompanied by a French defense official who meets with IDF commander to discuss use of a particular detection device the French have for locating bomb making facilities. IDF commander and French defense official conduct private talks.

**Commented [R62]:** I disagree. This is not about crowd control such as police with civilians, but an army facing multi-layer attacks, including sniper fire, hand grenades and improvised explosive devices. If any international consultancy takes place, it would be with military specialists.

80. Diskin awakens. Startled. A bit disoriented for a moment. Realizes he is at home, in his bed. Glances around the room. No one there but himself. Gets out of bed, goes to a window, looks outside. It's the middle of the day. Sees his cell phone on the nightstand. Checks the time and day. Bedroom door opens. He wheels around, ready to fight. Sees his wife. She smiles at him. Have a good rest? How long have I been sleeping. She kisses him. You came home yesterday afternoon. He kisses her again. Then his mind kicks in and he remembers all that has happened. Says, I need to get to the office. She offers him lunch. He says he doesn't have time. Showers, gets ready, passes through the kitchen on the way out. Smells the food. Pauses. She hands him a plate. He eats lunch.

81. Diskin arrives at the office in Beersheba. Harel and the tech people are just then getting into Shammass' laptop and online accounts. Apparently used as an email program as a drop box. Users log in, write a message and save it in the draft file. Other users log in, read, and leave a reply. Allows them to communicate but without actually sending anything to anyone. Diskin sits at the computer. Reads the messages. Harel offers to help. Sits at a computer nearby. Both men are reading through the messages. Work into the night. Find information that pieces the plan together. Backpack bombs. Remotely detonated. Only able to obtain three canisters of Sarin. Difficult smuggling it down from Lebanon. Couldn't get the component, assembly suggestion to work. From the dates of the messages and replies, Diskin figures out that the attack in Jerusalem

**Commented [R63]:** Why only now? This would have happened right away.

is now set for the following day. Though it's the wee hours of the morning, Diskin notifies supervisor at home. Tells him what they have found. They discuss it. Think the border protests happen today, along with the attack in Jerusalem. Supervisor says, I'll notify the director.

82. Supervisor notifies the Shin Bet director with a phone call to his home. Tells him about the new threat of Sarin in Jerusalem and about today being the day. All of it on the same day? Yes. It seems the border protests will be an attempt to distract us. Divert our attention while the main objective is the attack on Jerusalem. Shin Bet director says we need to alert everyone. Supervisor agrees. No time to work this up ahead of time. From here to the end of this, we'll have to feed everyone raw intelligence and process it as we go. Shin Bet director notifies Mossad, IDF, the prime minister's office. Prime minister's office responds by tightening security at the Western Wall. IDF soldiers man the gates at the Old City. No one in or out with a backpack. IDF, Shin Bet position additional air samplers around the city and in outlying suburbs. Overflights begin with aircraft equipped with airborne detection devices.

**Commented [R64]:** Too much Mossad involved. They would be relevant only to external issues, probably not now – real time thwarting of a terror attack.

**Commented [R65]:** No. The Shin Bet would have told them what is planned, including this, of course. And the plan would simply be approved.

**Commented [R66]:** No such thing.

83. Meanwhile, Diskin grabs Harel and says come with me. Where are we going? Jerusalem. Harel asks, what are we going to do when we get there? Diskin says, I don't know, exactly. But this is what we must do next. How do you know that? Diskin says, I feel it. Maybe we'll see something, or someone but we need to be in Jerusalem. Go outside to the car. Drive away.

**Commented [R67]:** No. They would be coordinating all efforts from a forward command group, NOT wander around to see if they can see something.

84. Diskin and Harel arrive in Jerusalem. Go to the streets near the old city. Arrive as the sun comes up. Looking. Searching. Tired. Exhausted. City slowly comes to life. People appear on the streets. Tourists. Tightened security leads to congestion. Harel and Diskin are searching, looking. Diskin sees a group of children with an adult. The children have back packs. Diskin stops them. He and Harel open the back packs. Look inside. Adults protest. They ignore them, but find nothing. See another group. Do the same thing. Diskin looks around. Worried. Sees other children. Some with back packs, some not. About to tell Harel to split up when he sees Masalha with a large group of children accompanied by several adults. The adults look like parents. Diskin says, there he is. Starts toward them. Harel follows. Masalha sees Diskin, their eyes meet.

**Commented [R68]:** See above comment.

**Commented [R69]:**

**Commented [R70]:** They already knew about the teacher and day trip from Rahat – this would have been dealt with!

**Commented [R71]:** Again – like in the movies – same hero does it all. Why not have a border police patrol of two female officers do this part?

**Commented [R72]:** Again – this would have been easily prevented.

Masalha has a knowing look. Runs. Diskin tells Harel to chase him. Harel starts after him. Diskin identifies himself to police officers standing nearby. Two of them join in the chase for Masalha.

85. Diskin identifies himself to the group of children who were with Masalha. Shouts for them to take off their back packs. Kids start dropping the backpacks. As they get them off, Diskin tells them to run. Backpacks are in a pile. Parents protest. Diskin tells them to step aside. Some pushing, shoving as they attempt to intervene. Diskin grabs a back pack, opens it. There's a bomb inside. Adults see it. Scared. Tell the kids to get the back packs off. As kids drop their back packs and start to run away, one of the kids runs away with the back pack still on. Diskin points to the pile, tells the police to search the back packs. What are we looking for? Bombs. And canisters of Sarin. Quickly. Before they explode. Diskin takes off after the one kid.

**Commented [R73]:** They would not have touched them but cleared the area and called the bomb squad.

86. Diskin searches, loses sight of the kid with the back pack. Searches. Up one street. The next. Frantic. Finally finds the kid in an alley, crouched in a doorway. Approaches. Tells the kid, it's okay. Just need to get the back pack off. That's all. Helps the kid up. Slips the back pack off. Opens the back. Sees a canister inside. Knows it's Sarin. Sees a bomb with it. Wires attached to various things. Not a bomb expert. No time for an expert. Then he hears an explosion from the direction of where they had taken off the other back packs. Snatches the canister out of the kid's back pack with one hand, flings the back pack away with the other. Shields the kid with his body. Back pack explodes. Parents arrive. Frantic. Screaming. Diskin stands. Kid is beneath him, safe and unharmed.

**Commented [R74]:** Again – HE is the one who happens to find him...?

**Commented [R75]:** Don't make this directional – in the streets of the old city you can't identify where noise comes from.

87. Meanwhile, on the same day as the children arrive in Jerusalem, the protests begin in Gaza. Despite the difficulties, Hadawi has gathered a large group which he uses to incite others to join the protest at the Sufa border crossing. They go house to house, building to building, cajoling, adjuring, demanding that others participate. "Remember the children." Huge crowd forms and begins marching toward the Sufa border crossing. They arrive to find television camera crews in place and filming as they approach, but the border crossing has been closed. Huge steel doors are in place, blocking the way. The crowd gathers there anyway, shouting and chanting. Hadawi's men—the central group of ten or fifteen—come to him. Gesture to the closed gates. Now what?

Didn't someone know **this would happen**? Hadawi tells the group to stay with the crowd. **Keep** them here. Lead them in chants. Do whatever you have to do, just don't let them leave. Then he takes five or six men with him in the pickup truck and drives away.

**Commented [R76]:** What happened? Nothing strange about closed gates.

88. Hadawi and the men in the pickup truck drive to Hadawi's storage container building. Clean out all of the rockets and RPGs. Go to the house Hadawi is using as a rallying point. Someone says, we're going to use these now? Yes. Won't we hit our own crowd? Not if we aim high enough. But no one can see over the wall or past the gates. We don't know what's over there. Hadawi says, Israelis are over there. Positions one of the rockets at a low angle, fires it. Shouts, Allah Akbar! Picks up another. Tells them to get busy. They lob missiles toward the border. Hear the explosions. **Keep on firing**.

**Commented [R77]:** Too much of this kind of activity goes on without response from the IDF. They would be identified and targeted.

89. At other locations along the Gaza border, similar incidents occur. The Kerem Shalom crossing at the junction of the Gaza, Egypt, and Israel borders has heavy steel barrier gates which are closed. Thousands gather there on the Gaza side but they cannot cross. Film crews record their gathering, but they do little more than chant and throw rocks over the border barrier.

90. The Erez crossing in the north and the Rafah crossing in the south have no heavy steel gates. IDF trucks and tanks are parked across them, blocking the way, but not completely. Huge groups gather there. Shouting, chanting. Then move toward the wall. Television cameras record. IDF troops manning the crossings warn them to move back. The groups keep coming. IDF troops fire tear gas canisters, rubber bullets in an attempt to stop them. Still the groups swarm forward. Then rockets explode on the Israeli side, behind the troops. A huge cargo plane appears overhead, moving low and slow but making an overwhelming noise. Crowd is startled, stars up at it. The plane is a **firefighting plane**. As it comes over the border crossing at Erez, it dumps its entire load of water on the crowd. People are **flattened**. Many of them stunned. Several are injured. But there are no deaths. As the crowd, soaked, recovers they begin to **disperse**, stagger away.

**Commented [R78]:** We do not have large firefighting planes.

**Commented [R79]:** I have been under such water drops. It is not so powerful. More like a spray. It would not have such an effect.

**Commented [R80]:** Nope. This would not happen. The only possible scenario is if they use special chemicals that omit a strong odor, making people vomit.



91. News of the protests in Gaza appears around the world, alongside reports of the attempted but thwarted bombing and gas attack in Jerusalem. Israeli officials and spokes people get the Israeli side of the story into every news report—this was a coordinated attack by Iran against Israel. All of it organized and coordinated by operatives from Iran. In Jerusalem, they used children to carry the bombs. Our agents disarmed them and no lives were lost, but this was horrendous and despicable **military** operation by Iran against the people of Israel and the sovereignty of the Israeli state. Instead of calling for sanctions against Israel, news agencies, governments and the like praise Israel for its diligence in uncovering the matter and its discipline in the measured but effective response.

**Commented [R81]:** I would NOT call this a military operation but state sponsored and activated terrorism.

92. In spite of the success and the world's adulation, the IDF commander is not quite satisfied that **all has come to an end**. Calls for a fresh assessment of the Iranian troops in Syria and Lebanon. Analysts review the latest images from Israeli satellites and data from the NSA. See that Iranian troop strength has continued to rise since the last review. Put together a chronology covering the past year. Then one of the analysts **notices** what appears to be heavy armament—tanks and mobile missiles moving toward the border. Last time they were here, now they are here. Another points out trucks on the Golan Heights. They analyze the images, determine that Iranian troops are slowly advancing toward the Israeli border and Hezbollah is moving cargo to the area. But what kind of cargo? Supervisor contacts **IDF commander**, requests overflight of **spy plane**. Within an hour or two, more images arrive. Analysts think that cargo might be rockets. You think? Can't be conclusive. Supervisor says, we can't take any chances with this. I think they are preparing to **invade** us. Check the region. See if anyone else is preparing for action. Analysts check data, **images** for neighboring countries. Find nothing.

**Commented [R82]:** This is never our mindset. It never "ends". And especially here – there is the issue of Iranian operatives in Lebanon and Syria.

**Commented [R83]:** Israel knows things not only from imagery. I would add here other sources. Intercept of communications etc.

**Commented [R84]:** Absolutely not. IDF Commander does not deal with this kind of stuff. Coordinated through work channels.

**Commented [R85]:** Not spy plane – but drone.

**Commented [R86]:** Invade? More likely launch an attack with stand-off weapons.

**Commented [R87]:** Again – too much reliance on images instead of multiple sources.

**Commented [R88]:** No. This would be the Intel chief.

93. IDF **analyst supervisor** briefs the IDF commander. They agree that the Iranian troops in Syria and Lebanon now pose a direct threat to Israel. IDF commander asks for a meeting with the prime minister. Tells the prime minister, we have a problem with those Iranian troops in Syria and Lebanon. Why? They've continued to increase in strength and they have slowly advanced toward our border. What do you think? I think the protests in Gaza, the attempt in Jerusalem, the Sarin gas was all a **cover** for the real action. Which is? An invasion. From Lebanon? Yes. And

**Commented [R89]:** Cover? Then it would have been coordinated to the same time frame.

Syria. Shows the prime minister some of the satellite images. Data from the NSA confirms these movements. What would you like to do? I would like to move some of our infantry units into the Galilee. Move several squadrons up from the south. You think we might have to strike against the Iranians in Syria and Lebanon? Yes. A preemptive strike. At the least, we need to be ready to repel an invasion. Prime minister says, any threat of wider attack? One involving the rest of our neighbors? We have nothing that indicates any preparation in that direction by anyone else. Then this is solely Iran. Yes. Prime minister say, and at last we meet our true enemy. IDF commander says, they have a huge stockpile of missiles. As does Hezbollah, though theirs are considerably smaller in size. Still, an all-in missile attack from Hezbollah followed by a similar attack from Iran could devastate our major cities. What are you saying? I'm saying, if we wait to respond until they attack us, we could end up defeating their attempt to take over us but lose the country in the process. Prime minister agrees. Tells him to move the troops and planes into position but not to repel. Plan to strike them first. I'll notify the Americans. IDF commander says, the US has repositioned a carrier group to the Mediterranean. Good. We may need their help. They've also moved one up to the Persian Gulf. And they've added planes to their base in Italy. I'll call the president right now. Make sure we're all working together. Yes, sir.

**Commented [R90]:** This is too limited. They would be talking about many other aspects. Especially MISSILE DEFENSE.

**Commented [R91]:** This sounds like the old days, when all our neighbors were potential enemies. Not anymore.

**Commented [R92]:** Absolutely not. We can't "lose the country" in a missile attack and this would not be said.

**Commented [R93]:** NO! IDF commander does NOT talk to the president. The prime minister does.

94. Prime minister phones the US president. They discuss the Iranian troops in Lebanon. US president asks what they plan to do. Prime minister says, our defense policy calls for a preemptive strike. We are small in area. Our enemies share our border. It is not possible for us to wait until attacked. President says, this is the scenario everyone fears. Prime minister says, this is the fight Iran chose. We don't intend to lose. President says, we'll back you up. What can we do to help? They agree to have their commanders coordinate US assistance.

**Commented [R94]:** Right!

**Commented [R95]:** Until now no mention of mobilizing missile defense assets. This would be discussed here.

95. In Iran, the Ayatollah receives news of the failures of the protest in Gaza and Jerusalem, Summons the top generals. Berates them for their failed plan. Then says, now what? The ranking general says, now we turn to the Mahdi option. Ayatollah frowns. The Mahdi option? Yes. And what is that? A conflagration in Israel so devastating that all the nations of the world come against us in an attempt to destroy us. And just before we are obliterated, the Mahdi appears to protect us and restore order. And what would this entail? General tells him, Hezbollah launches a

**Commented [R96]:** Who is us? Don't understand this part.

hundred thousand rockets into northern Israel. While the Israeli's are forced into a defensive posture for that, our troops move out from Lebanon and invade Israel from the north. Before the Israelis can counter attack, we launch the greatest barrage of missiles against them ever launched by any nation against anyone. From here in Iran? Yes. From here in Iran. Perhaps even from Yemen. We strike Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa, Ashdod. All of those cities will be devastated, first by the explosions from the missiles and then by the fires those explosions create. We know the targets. They are already programmed into the firing system. At the same time, ISIS and Al-Qaeda cells already training in the Sinai move up from the south, overrunning smaller towns and advancing quickly on Beersheba with the kind of fast-paced attack they used in Iraq. Ayatollah says, I will consider it.

**Commented [R97]:** Not only northern Israel. They cover practically the entire country.

**Commented [R98]:** Too far. They don't have long range missiles there.

**Commented [R99]:** Again – this is exaggerating the effect of a missile attack. Unpleasant, of course, but it does not flatten the entire city.

**Commented [R100]:** Absolutely not. They don't have the size and capabilities to do this. Maximum launch rockets, and infiltrate into Israel for specific terror attacks.

96. Two days later, the Ayatollah approves the general's Mahdi plan. The general sets the plan in motion. Technicians and soldiers begin preparing missiles for launch from sites inside Iran.

97. Satellites operated by the CIA, NSA, other US agencies, along with listening stations operated by the NSA pick up the missile preparation activity in Iran. Confirm that Iran is preparing large numbers of missiles for launch. Pinpoint twenty five locations being prepared for those launches. Another dozen potential launch sites as well. And, they see increased activity at Houthis training sites in Yemen known to be supported by Iran and from which missiles have previously been launched against Saudi Arabia. CIA analyst supervisor briefs the CIA director. CIA director meets with the US director of intelligence. They review the information, then brief the US president.

98. After being briefed by the CIA director and the director of intelligence, the US president convenes the national security team in the White House situation room. Reviews the latest information. Gets everyone on the same page. Orders the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to prepare an operation that will eliminate Iran's missile threat to Israel.

**Commented [R101]:** Nothing was said about Israel in the intelligence – just that they were preparing missiles. Also – They would have already coordinated with Israel before this meeting.

99. The US president phones the Israeli prime minister. Tells him what they're seeing from their satellite images. Prime minister says he has been notified by the IDF commander that Iran is

preparing its missiles for launch, but he has not given me the details yet. IDF commander is on his way to brief me now. President says, we're planning a response. Call me back after you've had your briefing. We'll wait to respond ourselves until we hear from you.

100. After the call to the Israeli prime minister, the US president phones the Saudi Arabian defense minister. Discusses the situation with him. We have detected activity in Iran indicating they are preparing for a massive missile strike against **Israel**. And we've seen increased activity at Houthis sites in Yemen previously used to launch missiles into Saudi Arabia. Looks like the **Houthis** may be preparing to join the attack against Israel. President asks if Saudi Arabia will attack the Yemen sites. The defense minister says that should not be a problem for us but he will have to confer with the Saudi king. Can you share your data with us? President agrees to share US data on the Yemen preparations.

**Commented [R102]:** First time this is clearly stated.

**Commented [R103]:** Don't think they have long range missiles in Yemen.

101. Later that day, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff briefs the president on a plan to move against Iran. We call this plan, Operation Daniel. We can hit all twenty-five of Iran's sites where they are currently preparing missiles for launch. And we can hit another ten sites that are potential locations for future launches. What about their nuclear program? So far as we know, they do not have weapons capability in the sense of a nuclear device. They do have the ability to prepare dirty bombs. Warheads laced with radioactive material. We know where some of that is. But they moved most of that and much of their development program underground. Can we include the known sites that remain above ground? We can add those to the targeting package but they would work better as follow up sites. They discuss the latest on the Houthis sites in Yemen. The Chairman relates Saudi Arabia is preparing to strike those sites. President says, and we are coordinating with them to make sure they have what they need? Yes, Mr. President. Very well. President likes the plan for Operation Daniel. Tells them to get the military in position to execute the plan.

102. After the meeting, the US secretary of state takes the president aside. They discuss the situation. The secretary is concerned about Israel's **neighbors** and how they might react to Operation Daniel. Suggests he should visit those countries to make sure they aren't going to join

**Commented [R104]:** Again – most neighbors view Iran as the enemy just like we do.

in attacking Israel in response to the operation. President is concerned about the secretary's safety and about the position they'd be in if the secretary is killed while on such a trip. Instead of sending the secretary he orders the secretary to instruct US ambassadors in Jordan and Egypt to deliver a strong message to the respective heads of state in Jordan and Egypt—sit this one out.

**Commented [R105]:** Why? No big deal to visit these countries.

**Commented [R106]:** Again – talking about these countries as Israel's enemies is a mistake.

103. Israeli prime minister calls the US president. Tells him the IDF commander and Israeli intelligence agencies indicate agree with the US assessment—that Iran is preparing a large scale missile strike against Israel. Hezbollah is preparing to strike us from the Golan Heights. And our operatives on the ground say that Iranian troops in Lebanon are preparing to speed up their move toward our border. President says he's spoken with his generals and they have a plan to launch a preemptive strike against Iran. Operation Daniel. Prime minister asks, when do you anticipate launching that strike? President says, we'll be ready to go within twelve hours. Good. We'll go them. Together. Yes. Together.

**Commented [R107]:** ???

**Commented [R108]:** US and Israel have not coordinated missile defense. There is much to do – including deployment of assets to Israel.

104. Early the next morning, US stealth bombers attack and destroy Iran radar, communication, and command sites. Immediately after that, the US launches cruise missiles from its carrier group in the Persian Gulf against missile launch targets in Iran. As those missiles are on their way, the US carrier group in the Mediterranean launches air strikes against Hezbollah and Iranian troop positions in Lebanon.

105. At the same time, IDF warplanes, flying over Saudi Arabian airspace with Saudi Arabian permission, attack more missile launch targets in Iran. They also strike known nuclear research sites and two uranium enrichment sites still operating above ground.

**Commented [R109]:** With such a massive US operation – no need for Israeli involvement. It's far and difficult.

106. While that occurs, Saudi Arabian jets attack Houthis sites in Yemen, hitting locations where rockets are being prepared for launch. At the same time, they attack and sink two Iranian ships at the port of Aden. And fly repeated sorties to disable the airports at Sana'a, Aden, Taiz, and Al Hudaydah. Strike numerous oil storage facilities as well.

107. In spite of the US and Israeli air strikes against Iran’s missile sites—and the collapse of that portion of Iran’s overall strategy—Iranian troops in Lebanon continue advancing toward the Israeli border. In response, the Israeli prime minister activates civil defense measures, opening bomb shelters, televising alerts reminding people about how to shelter in place. Urging everyone to prepare to take cover on a moment’s notice. Then, Hezbollah launches a barrage from Lebanon toward Israel, using its remaining missiles. All across northern Israel, warning sirens wail as Israelis take cover. The missiles strike Israeli troops near the border, but also hit several northern Israeli cities. IDF responds with air strikes on the Hezbollah launch sites. US provides satellite information and analysis that pinpoints the launch locations.

**Commented [R110]:** This would have happened simultaneously with the attack on Iran.

**Commented [R111]:** Remaining? There is no way that an attack crippled their array of missiles. They are widely dispersed and hidden.

**Commented [R112]:** Again – not only northern Israel.

**Commented [R113]:** There relay is no such thing “launch sites”!

**Commented [R114]:** No – the US has no advantage when it comes to this kind of intelligence in Lebanon.

108. Rather than taking defensive positions, Israeli troops arriving on the northern front advance and engage the advancing Iranian troops. Major battles occur on the Lebanese side of the border. Additional IDF units are brought up to join the fight. Widespread air strikes by IDF and US warplanes support the ground troops.

**Commented [R115]:** As I said before – Iranian troops doesn’t sound right. Most clashes will be with Hezbollah.

**Commented [R116]:** US planes would not support Israeli troops.

109. While fighting rages along the northern Israeli border, ISIS units roll out of the Sinai, sweep northward, opening a southern front in the attack. Advancing rapidly, burning and pillaging, they quickly gain control of the area between the border and Sde Boker. Additional ISIS units cross from Egypt near the Mediterranean coast. Storm the Kerem Shalom checkpoint on the Gaza Barrier and enter Gaza. Their arrival and success in overrunning the checkpoint incites Palestinians in Gaza to join them. Using a tank commandeered from the Kerem Shalom checkpoint, they ram the gate at the Sufa Crossing. Thousands of Gaza residents have rallied to the cause and flood through the crossing into Israel. IDF units manning the checkpoint use a fighting retreat—fight and fall back, fight and fall back—as a stalling action while calling for reinforcements.

**Commented [R117]:** Again – impossible. Some could enter but certainly not “gain control”.

110. In response to the ISIS threat, the US carrier group in the Mediterranean launches airstrikes against the attack surging through the Sufa border checkpoint. The IDF commander sends troops to the south to confront ISIS at Sufa and at the leading edge of the ISIS advance toward

**Commented [R118]:** Again – too much mixing Israeli and American forces. They would not be operating here.

Beersheba. IDF units engage ISIS at a spot between Sde Boker and Beersheba. US jets provide close air support for those troops.

**Commented [R119]:** NO.

111. After several days of heavy fighting, IDF troops fighting in southern Lebanon bring the Iranian advance to a halt. Most of the Iranian units are devastated. IDF also retakes the Golan Heights. And in the south, the combined IDF and US effort near the Sinai and Gaza borders halts the advance of ISIS units, then drives them back to the Sinai border. Retake control of the Sufa and Kerem Shalom checkpoints. Thousands of Gazans are dead, as are many from ISIS. IDF pursues ISIS fighters into the Sinai but eventually the ISIS fighters simply melt into the Sinai desert and disappear.

**Commented [R120]:** Such a scenario would take several weeks, at least.

**Commented [R121]:** Retakes? When have we lost the Golan?

112. After order is restored, the US president and Israeli prime minister conduct a joint telepress conference by satellite—the president at the White House in Washington, the prime minister at the Israeli ministry of defense in Tel Aviv—explaining the operation on its various fronts.

113. Meanwhile, Diskin has been at the Shin Bet office in Beer Sheba for days. Living and working at the office. He was concerned about his family's safety, but monitored the ISIS advance, the IDF response, and was never in doubt IDF would hold them off. While keeping an eye on that, Diskin and fellow Shin Bet agents continued to work. As a result, they located Masalha—the Arab teacher who organized the children for the Jerusalem attack. He is now in custody. After lengthy interrogation and coaxed by offer of punishment less than the death penalty for what he did, Masalha begins to talk. Gives details of the planning and organization of the attack. Tells them about Rajabian, the Iranian operative who contacted him and coordinated the attack. As they are ending one of their interrogation sessions, Diskin shows Masalha a picture of Masud Darwaza, the Arab spy who was killed while working with Diskin. Masalha does not know him or anything about him. Diskin presses the point, arguing, threatening, but still Masalha insists he does not know Darwaza or anything about him. Frustrated, Diskin tries to think of another way to get at the same information, then remembers the picture he recovered from Shammass' apartment on Cyprus. That picture was of Shammass and Hadawi, a known Hamas

**Commented [R122]:** No death penalty given in Israel.

operative. Maybe Masalha knows something about Hadawi. Maybe Hadawi can tell him about Darwaza's death. Diskin shows Masalha the picture of Shammaas that was taken with Hadawi. Points to Shammaas. Asks about him. Masalha admits knowing Shammaas. We were friends in school. Diskin already knows about him but uses him to get Masalha to talk. Masalha wants to know how Diskin came to have that picture. Diskin avoids the question. Asks about the man standing next to Shammaas in the picture. After lengthy interrogation, Masalha admits that the man next to Shammaas in the picture is Mohammad Hadawi, that he knew Shammaas was Hadawi's cousin, and that he knew Hadawi was a member of Al-Qassam. He is the one who introduced me to all of this. We met on several occasions while we were in school. He came to London to see Shammaas. We went out to the clubs. What was his involvement with the protests in Gaza at the border crossings? I do not know. What was his involvement with you and the attack in Jerusalem? He was not involved at all. You expect us to believe that? When Rajabian contacted me, I asked few questions. I dealt solely with him. He told me I should know as little as possible about the operation. If you had to look for Hadawi, where would you look first? He has a place. It's actually a shipping crate. One of those metal cargo containers. He uses it as his hiding place. Keeps things there that he doesn't want anyone to know about. How do you know about it? His cousin told me. Where is it? In Gaza. You've been to Gaza? No. But Shammaas has been to the container. He followed Masalha to it once. Can you tell me where it is? It is by the sea. Near Khan Yunis. That is all I know.

114. After further interrogation by other Shin Bet agents, Masalha provides additional information about Rajabian. Tells interrogators Rajabian lives in Beersheba. Gives them the location. Probably not there now. I'm sure he left as soon as the attack in Jerusalem was discovered.

115. Diskin and a team from Shin Bet go to Rajabian's house in Beersheba. He is not there but they find documents, notes, other information that confirm the house was his residence and that provide details about the things he was working on.

**Commented [R123]:** He probably would have cleared it out.



116. A few weeks later, as order is beginning to return to life in Israel, a Mossad operative working in Gaza catches sight of Rajabian, the Iranian operatives who coordinated the attack in Jerusalem. Photographs him meeting with Zoabi, others. Mossad operative notifies his office. Mossad director reviews the matter and decides to send a wet team to get Rajabian. Notifies Shin Bet director of the action and asks if he has anyone who wants to accompany the team.

**Commented [R124]:** Mossad are not active in Gaza.

**Commented [R125]:** Again – not Mossad, and too much mixing.

117. Diskin's supervisor tells Diskin about the planned action. Asks if he is interested in participating. Diskin readily agrees. Diskin leaves the office, joins the Mossad team as they prepare for the operation. Not much time to rehearse, just coordinate their plans.

118. Diskin and the Mossad team slip into Gaza. Locate Zoabi. Follow him for a day or two. See Rajabian. They take Rajabian out with a single shot to the head. Someone in a nearby building sees them. Shoots at them. Gunfight erupts. Several Hamas operatives are killed in the process. In the confusion, Zoabi slips away. Diskin sees him getting away, goes after him but loses him. Mossad team breaks off the fight, slips away, move to the preplanned extraction point. Diskin goes with them a ways, then bows out. **Something I have to do.** They urge him to return with them, but he refuses.

**Commented [R126]:** No way would this all happen. And no way he would leave the team like this.

119. Diskin makes his way down the Gaza Strip to Khan Yunis, a neighborhood near the southern end of the strip. In spite of the bomb damaged buildings and urban blight, the neighborhood still has a distinct identity. In the densest areas, Diskin moves from block to block, building to building, making his way toward the coast in search of Hadawi, hoping to learn more about the death of Darwaza. After two days, he reaches the coast, finds several storage containers but they are either empty or occupied by families. Moves on.

**Commented [R127]:** No way Diskin could move around like this. Only a local asset activated by Shin Bet.

120. Not far from the Egyptian border, Diskin finds a storage container near the coast, just as Masalha described. Seems a good prospect for Hadawi's location. Checks it to find it is locked. This is encouraging so Diskin hides. Waits. Watches. Sure enough Hadawi appears—Diskin recognizes him from the photos in the Shin Bet file. Waits while Hadawi unlocks the container, goes inside. Then Diskin approaches quickly. Steps inside. Hadawi is startled by Diskin's sudden

appearance. Wheels around to face him. Guns and ammunition stacked in the container. Grenades. A mortar with shells. Other boxes and crates. You are Mohammad Hadawi. You were looking for someone else? What do you want with me? I want to know about Masud Darwaza. Hadawi smirks. The traitor. You knew him? Why are you concerned about him? Before Diskin can respond, Hadawi has a look of realization. Ahh. Yes. I see. You were his Israeli contact. You got him killed. **Who killed him?** I do not know who strangled him but— He was strangled? Yes. In his bed while he slept, which is better than he deserved. Darwaza was a good man. Darwaza was a weak man. Who killed him? Do you really think I would tell you that? Diskin **shoots him in the leg.** Hadawi screams in pain. I will never tell you anything. Diskin shoots him in the other leg. Tell me who killed Darwaza. Hadawi is scared now. Okay. Okay. I'll tell you. The person you are looking for is... Just then, a shadow falls over them and Hadawi looks past Diskin. Smiles. **Diskin turns to see** Zoabi standing behind him. Zoabi smiles. I knew you would be here. How so? Zoabi says, you are a Shin Bet agent. You were Darwaza's handler. I knew you would never let him go. And I knew you had discovered Hadawi's identity. Zoabi looks around Diskin. What have you done to Hadawi? Hadawi shouts, he shot me. Zoabi nods. Yes, he did. And what did you tell him? Hadawi shakes his head. I didn't tell him anything. Zoabi has a sinister smile, but you were about to, weren't you. Hadawi shakes his head. No. No. I would **never**— With a single quick motion, Zoabi draws a pistol and shoots Hadawi in the head. In the same instant, Diskin shoots Zoabi.

121. Two days later, Diskin returns to his home in Beersheba, dirty, sweaty, exhausted. Collapses into his wife's arms. They embrace. His children gather around. He hugs his children. Then heads down the hall toward the bedroom and a shower. Wife follows him. Helps him undress. Asks if he is alright. Diskin turns to face her. I was so afraid. She looks concerned. You were worried the fighting would reach Beersheba? Diskin shakes his head. No. I wasn't afraid about that. Then about what? Jerusalem, he whispers. She looks at him, waiting for him to say more. He says, **they were just kids.** Begins to cry. They could have all been killed. She takes him in her arms. Says, but you rescued them. You saved them. You kept them safe. Diskin cries. She holds him closer. He says, when will it stop? When will they stop trying to kill us? She whispers, it will never stop. He pulls away, a puzzled look on his face. What do you mean? She says, they

**Commented [R128]:** Why is it so important to find out who killed him? There are more important things.

**Commented [R129]:** Would not happen for two reasons – this isn't moral or legal. We DON' do this, and – also not operational. Too much noise. Even with a silencer – the man must be screaming now.

**Commented [R130]:** Exactly... which is why he would not have been acting like this at all.

**Commented [R131]:** As soon as Zoabi appeared, Diskin would shoot, not talk.

**Commented [R132]:** There was an all-out war with Iran, with a serious threat to Israel, and the only thing on his mind are those kids? Shin Bet save people every day.

hate us for who we are. We can never change who we are. This is our life. A life of struggle. That is the way it always has been. As we are who we are, and they are who they are, things will always be this way. She kisses him. And that is why we have you. She kisses him again. My brave, strong husband.

**Commented [R133]:** Not that I have an easy answer, but this may be overly simplifying the situation. For there are elements of religion, territory, national narratives... But I've said enough.

**Commented [R134]:** Great story! I was stressed to see how it will end!