

Small Victories

By

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*All dialogue in Arabic unless noted otherwise.

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The SOUND of a TRUCK'S GEARS changing over black.

FADE IN:

INT. TRUCK - MORNING - AT SUNRISE

Looking out the rickety window of a truck's cab is TARIK ABU-KHDEIR, 29, lean face, black hair, brown, sleep deprived eyes. Asleep in the middle seat next to him is his brother, HAMZI, balding, 35. At the wheel of the truck is his father, MUHUMMAD, 55, salt and pepper hair, mustache.

TARIK
How much further?

MUHUMMAD
Almost there.

The TRUCK'S MOTOR REVS.

INT./EXT. TRUCK/CONSTRUCTION SITE - MORNING

OUTSIDE - Tarik opens the back gate of the truck to let out a group of 8 construction workers. Hamzi and Muhammad walk toward the construction site.

HAMZI
(in the distance)
Let's go slow-ass.

TARIK
Coming.

Tarik collects his tools as he and the workers follow.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - LATER

The tendons and muscles rip out from Tarik's arms and neck as he and the workers dig six feet below ground in a crescent shape toward a water tower.

TARIK'S POV: MANAGER #1 AND MANAGER #2 sit in plastic chairs. Muhammad stands close as the men give him directions and then wave him off. Muhammad slinks away.

HAMZI
Let's go Tarik!

Tarik looks ahead - ten more feet. He continues digging.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - LATER

Tarik drinks from a large jug of water in the harsh sunlight - passes the jug down the line of workers as they watch-

-A massive, hydraulic semi-truck unloading 12 feet long steel joints, which SLAM into each other on the ground in a lumbering pile.

MUHUMMAD
(Approaches)
Break's over.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - LATER

Tarik stands in the trench and awaits the lowering of a steel pipe. As it nears the ground, he and four other men place them in a long track.

HAMZI
(Watching overhead)
Tight!

Tarik's hands, covered by gloves, twist the giant pipes into joints.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - LATER

Close on a nozzle as water SPRAYS.

Tarik fills a bottle and takes a drink of water in the top-heavy afternoon sun. A small tractor lays dirt over the plumbing trench.

TARIK'S POV - Muhammad walking over to the seated men, Hamzi following. Muhammad points things out, the men ignore him. Hamzi starts yelling and Manager #1 yells back. Tarik moves closer.

MUHUMMAD
How can we pay the workers if you
don't pay us?

MANAGER #1
And I'm telling you that nobody
gets paid until the inspectors
come.

HAMZI
When will that be?

MANAGER #1
They come when they come, God
willing.

Manager #2, still seated, lights a cigarette.

HAMZI
You promised us the money when we
finished.

MANAGER #1
(laughing)
Show me this contract! Show me!

MANAGER #2
We will pay when it's finished and
it's not finished until the
inspector comes.

Hamzi PUSHES him over his chair. Tarik HOLDS Hamzi back.

MANAGER #1
(Wagging a finger in
Hamzi's face)
I'll see to it that you never-

Hamzi shoves Tarik away and PUNCHES Manager #1, dropping him
to the ground. MANAGER #2 goes at Hamzi, but Tarik grabs him
by the shirt, raises his fist, holds it, pushes the scared
man away instead.

Manager #2 runs away.

MUHUMMAD
(To the gawking workers)
Let's go! Pack up your things.

Tarik grabs his tools.

EXT/INT. TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

Tarik approaches the truck. Hamzi sits in the front seat.
Muhummad at the wheel.

TARIK
Why did you have to punch him?

HAMZI
Shut up Tarik. Just shut up.

MUHUMMAD
(Starting the truck)
Quiet! Both of you. It's over.

TARIK
This always happens.

Hamzi closes the door on Tarik. A POUNDING on the back of the truck's cab.

MEN IN TRUCK
Let's go! We want to go home!

OUTSIDE - Tarik hops up in the back of the truck and closes the back gate.

OMITTED

OMITTED

EXT. NABLUS CITY STREET - SUNSET

The workers file out, Tarik waits and locks the truck.

The men walk with their tools toward the nearby Refugee camp and small city center begin as lights come on.

OMITTED

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Tarik scrubs the heavy layers of dirt off of his hands, massaging the calluses formed on his palms. He splashes water on his face, washing clean the earth stuck to his dry skin.

MIRIAM, 27, tall with brown, curly hair, a quiet, assured presence enters with a new shirt as Tarik towels off.

MIRIAM
Put this on.

Miriam watches him dress. Tarik walks past her for the kitchen.

INT. FAMILY TABLE - NIGHT

Muhummad finishes a bite and reaches for a cigarette in his shirt pocket. Hamzi eats rapidly, arm around his plate.

At the head of the table sits MOSES ABU-KHDEIR, 85, the patriarch of the family eating little. Next to Tarik sits ISAAQ, Tarik and Miriam's son, 6.

Miriam enters with a plate of rice, which she hands to Tarik.

MIRIAM
Everything okay? How's the work coming?

MUHUMMAD
It's fine.

Angle on Miriam as she returns to the kitchen with a skeptical look to sit at a table with Tarik's mother AISHE ABU-KHDEIR - 55, stern, the limp of a woman always with a child on her hip. Holding a baby boy is Hamzi's wife DANIA, 30.

Back to scene: Hamzi finishes a bite of food.

HAMZI
Tell your wife to stay out of our business.

Tarik stares at Hamzi.

HAMZI (CONT'D)
If I wanted to talk with her I would eat in the kitchen. But I'm not a woman. Maybe you should go eat in the kitchen.

MUHUMMAD
Watch it, Hamzi.

TARIK
All you ever want is a fight.

HAMZI

At least I don't run away from them. Have ever actually fought anybody?

TARIK

I've fought with you, haven't I?

HAMZI

If you could call me kicking your ass fighting.

MUHUMMAD

Knock it off both of you. Neither of you was worth a damn as a boxer anyway.

Tarik stands, pushes his chair back rapidly to leave the room.

HAMZI

(Standing up)

Walk away as always.

TARIK

I didn't box, because you only let me spar with Hamzi. I always had to follow Hamzi.

MUHUMMAD

He was the better boxer.

TARIK

I was good enough. And then I follow you both into business and it's the same. You're both losers.

Hamzi PUSHES Tarik against the wall, forearms and hands locking and wrestling.

Muhummad tries to break them up. Tarik pushes Muhummad away and PUNCHES Hamzi in the cheek, stunning him.

Hamzi throws punches to Tarik's blocking arms.

ANGLE on Old Moses shuttling Isaaq out of the room.

A PUNCH LANDS to Tarik's head and the room spins.

Miriam enters and pushes Hamzi from standing over Tarik.

Hamzi exits.

Tarik sits on the floor with a knot forming on his eye.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Miriam exits the bathroom with Isaaq and helps him dress for school. Tarik stirs, puts his tired feet to the floor.

MIRIAM
Get some sleep?

Tarik shrugs. Isaaq walks to his father and traces a finger over the black and blue eye.

MIRIAM
Get your bag Isaaq.
(To Tarik)
What are you going to do?

TARIK
Look for work.

MIRIAM
Walk with us to school first.

Tarik nods, pulls on his work pants and a gray hooded sweatshirt, and collects his tools.

EXT. ABU-KHDEIR HOME - CONTINUOUS

Tarik, Miriam, and Isaaq exit the home. Next to their home sits a small, brick two story building where two men stand at the front door. The windows are curtained.

GUARD 1
A blessed morning.

Tarik and Miriam nod. Isaaq stares at the gun on Guard 2's shoulder. The Guard repositions the AK-47 so that it is on full display.

EXT. SCHOOL - MORNING

Miriam and Tarik walk Isaaq down a dusty road towards a small school building as other families begin to report.

MIRIAM
Be good.

ISAAQ
I will. Bye dad.

Tarik nods from under the hood of his sweatshirt. Isaaq joins other children running into the central school building.

MIRIAM
I will work if I have to.

TARIK
You shouldn't have to.

They turn from the school and begin walking.

MIRIAM
What else would we do? I'm tired of struggling every time this happens.

Tarik's hands are shoved in his pockets.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
We were young when we had Isaaq and we figured it out. So we should get right back out there.
(Stopping and grabbing
Tarik's arm.)
I can work and you can-

TARIK
Stop. Can we just walk and not talk.

MIRIAM
That's your plan?

TARIK
I'm tired of everyone telling me what to do.

MIRIAM
I'm not everyone, Tarik.

She walks away.

TARIK
Miriam-

Tarik walks the other direction.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET CORNER - MORNING

A group of fifty Day Laborers crowd a street corner surrounding a lineup of trucks.

Tarik is in the middle of the group of men pushing and pulling. Tarik holds out his hand to be noticed among the other hands.

TARIK'S POV - At the tail end of the line of trucks, Tarik sees his father and brother smoking and waiting next to the family pick-up truck.

Tarik pushes his way out of the middle of the group and walks away AROUND the corner-

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

-Tarik walks as the SOUNDS of the workers and traffic diminish. The sounds of kids playing nearby; televisions from open windows; Tarik's footsteps on the gravel road can be heard as he continues with his hands in his pockets.

OMITTED

INT. BEDROOM - EARLY EVENING

Tarik sits on the floor of the bedroom watching Isaaq draw and play. Isaaq drops his marker, takes a BALL and rolls it toward Tarik. Tarik rolls it back.

Miriam enters with a couple of plates.

ISAAQ
Why are we eating on the floor?

MIRIAM
It's just for a couple of nights.

Miriam hands them plates.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
We'll have to find something better
then the floor.

ISAAQ
I like the floor. It's fun.

MIRIAM
We're not floor people.

TARIK
Where else would we go?

ISAAQ
We could go to grandma and
grandpas.

MIRIAM
Isaaq - quiet. Eat. We can't stay
with my family.

The sound of voices in the dining room.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
We would be there if there was
room.

TARIK
You want to leave?

MIRIAM
Do you really want to stay?

Isaaq finishes a bite and puts his plate aside, rolls the
ball to Tarik. Tarik rolls it to Miriam. She rolls it back
to Isaaq. Isaaq laughs, picks up the ball, goes to Tarik and
plops down in his lap.

Tarik stretches out his arm to Miriam, which she takes, and
comes closer.

TARIK
We'll figure it out.

They sit in silence.

FADE TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK THE SOUND OF HELICOPTER BLADES CUTTING THE AIR.

(C)KADER/SV3D

EXT. STREET - DAY

Children, women, and men run quickly through the small streets.

Tarik steps out of the family home to see three helicopters distantly in the sky.

TARIK
Miriam! Isaaq!

EXT. NABLUS STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Tarik, Miriam, and Isaaq hold hands and try to keep up the pace of the crowds. The SOUND of HELICOPTERS bleeds over the commotion.

EXT. CITY CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

Tarik and family enter the densely packed city center to see THREE HELICOPTERS FLYING OVER NABLUS.

MAN IN CROWD
(Yelling Up)
Abu Ammar!

The small crowd repeats "Abu Ammar" as the Helicopters thunder overhead and continue in the sky. The teary eyes of women and men alike.

A HAND GRABS onto Tarik's shoulder. Tarik turns startled to see a fierce eyed man, who smiles, this is MOUSSA, 30.

MIRIAM
You're home!

Moussa smiles warmly at Miriam. Tarik and Moussa shake, do a brotherly handshake, kiss cheeks a number of times.

MOUSSA
Lets walk.

They work through the crowd and disappear. The helicopters quiet as voices over loudspeakers are heard.

EXT. NABLUS STREET - LATER

AT THE TOP of a quiet street with an incline, they walk outside of a little building. A SIGN painted in bubbly Arabic reading: *Recreation Center*. Tarik and Moussa peek in through the dusty plate glass window.

TARIK'S POV-A cramped dusty gym. IN the corner is a homemade boxing ring with a concrete floor, four posts sunk into blocks of above-ground concrete, tethered by large, burly pieces of twine rope.

MOUSSA

Looks the same, just covered in dust. Used to be packed with kids. You and your brother filled it alone. How is he?

TARIK

Same.

MOUSSA

Is he still boxing?

Tarik shakes his head.

MOUSSA

You both should have continued.

A TRUCK PASSES behind, rattling the window. Men on the back yell down at them-

GROUP OF MEN

Arafat! Abu Ammar!

CELEBRATORY GUNFIRE in the near distance. They continue walking around the building.

EXT. REC. CENTER FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

The field behind the rec. Center has small and dusty soccer pitch where little grass remains. Two goal posts without nets sit at each end.

MIRIAM

A doctor now.

MOUSSA

Finally finished.

MIRIAM
Your accent sounds European and
Syrian.

MOUSSA
And American.

Moussa humbly laughs.

TARIK
Are you home for good?

MOUSSA
Yes. The country needs help now
more than ever.

ISAAQ
(running over)
How come we never come here?

TARIK
Nobody works here anymore.

MIRIAM
I remember playing soccer here.

MOUSSA
We used to do everything here.
Look at it now. This is Arafat's
legacy.

Tarik motions for Isaaq to go run around.

MIRIAM
It's not just Arafat, it's
occupation.

MOUSSA
We surrendered in Oslo, we got
nothing. Barak, the Americans,
they cheated us.

MIRIAM
I agree, but-

MOUSSA
You're still a strong thinker
Miriam. But listen, things are
going to change. There is a lot of
work to do, but we can fix this
situation.

TARIK
Let's go Isaaq.

Isaaq runs over and they leave the field.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

The SOUND OF VOICES/COMMOTION outside the window wake Tarik. He looks towards Isaaq asleep in his little bed in the corner.

THE SOUND OF A DESCENDING MISSILE. The window LIGHTS UP. Tarik looks toward the window when-

AN EXPLOSION erupts moments after the light burst. The window over Isaaq's bed shatters down.

ISAAQ
DAD!

Isaaq leaps out of bed, STEPS on a jagged piece of glass, and falls holding his foot. Miriam goes to him and picks him up.

The white light is replaced by the hot orange light of a fire outside the window. All three run from the room into-

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

- The living room of the house as the three are met by Muhummad and Aishe, panicked and afraid.

MUHUMMAD
It was a bomb.

She cradles her son and looks to see Tarik putting on his shoes.

MIRIAM
Tarik! Don't go outside.

TARIK
He's cut bad. Stay here.

Tarik grabs Isaaq softly and is out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Tarik looks toward the blaze. A HIGH PITCHED RING overwhelms him - either a siren or the ringing in his ears.

Men transport water buckets to try to put out the fire.

Tarik walks toward the fire to see the shell of a car destroyed from the middle out. Charred remains inhabit the interior. Tarik's eyes widen. He covers Isaaq's face with his hand and turns away.

CUT TO:

INT. NABLUS CLINIC - MOMENTS LATER

Tarik crowds through the clinic door holding Isaaq.

The clinic is overcrowded with people. Women wail and men yell - a RINGING SOUND heard over everything.

An ATTENDANT helps Tarik and Isaaq towards a bed. Tarik looks to see-

MOUSSA fighting the crowded clinic to attend to an Injured Man with a sterile cloth.

Moussa hands the man off to an attendant and heads toward Tarik and Isaaq.

TARIK
His foot.

MOUSSA
Hold him tight.

Moussa squeezes the boys foot to retrieve a piece of glass. Isaaq SQUEALS.

Tarik rubs Isaaq on the head to calm him as Moussa quickly dresses and tapes the wound.

ANGLE ON a dribble of blood coming from Tarik's ear.

Moussa mouths something inaudible as Tarik looks on blankly.

MOUSSA
(Louder to Tarik's other
ear)
Go home!

An AMBULANCE SIREN wails over the RINGING. Men rush in carrying an injured man.

MOUSSA
Everybody move!

TARIK'S POV - Moussa moves with precision, quietly graceful in the alarming noise. Tarik and Isaaq are forced from the clinic.

CUT TO:

INT. ABU-KHDEIR FAMILY KITCHEN - MORNING

Miriam holding Isaaq. Tarik slumps in his chair. Aishe stands behind Muhummad who thumbs through his subha.

MUHUMMAD
It's madness. In the middle of all
these homes.

TARIK
It was dangerous for Hamas to use
it as a safe-house.

MUHUMMAD
Still. It's murder.

The SOUND of the FRONT DOOR brings in Hamzi, Dania and the baby.

HAMZI
So, what happened?

MIRIAM
The window fell on us. Tarik had
to take Isaaq to the clinic.

HAMZI
Your ear is bloody.

Tarik feels for the dried blood trail on his cheek.

HAMZI (CONT'D)
Dogs!

Aishe HUSHES Hamzi.

HAMZI (CONT'D)

No! We can't just sit here anymore
and take this. No one is safe. And
we are doing nothing.

MIRIAM

What can we do?-

DANIA

-We are sitting targets.

TARIK

Lower your voice, Isaaq is
exhausted-

HAMZI

We are all exhausted!

DANIA

We have to get the media to see
what's happening.

Tarik stands and picks Isaaq up from Miriam's arms. The
family quiets a bit as they exit-

HAMZI (CONT'D)

He can't hear us anyway.

Tarik leaves the kitchen.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tarik lays Isaaq onto the couch and rubs his head until Isaaq
finally closes his eyes. Tarik closes his eyes as well.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER MORNING

Tarik wakes with a start. Hamzi sits on the chair nearby,
sleeping. Tarik rubs his jaw on both sides and tries to move
it around in circles. He looks at the BLOOD STAIN on the
couch. He holds his hand to his ear.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Tarik enters the kitchen to find Moussa across the table from
Muhummad and Miriam.

MOUSSA
Good morning.

Aishe enters with a plate of tea and sits it down on the table where a STUFFED ENVELOPE sits.

MOUSSA
I came to check up. How do you feel?

TARIK
The ringing won't go away. And it's bleeding.

MOUSSA
May I have a look?

Tarik nods. Moussa gently uses his OTOSCOPE to inspect each ear.

MOUSSA
Lot of blood. Perforated eardrum. Popped. Good thing is it's only one ear. Just needs time to heal.

AISHE
Have you slept?

MOUSSA
No. God willing, someday I will.

MUHUMMAD
We heard it was Abu Wahad in the car.

Moussa picks up his tea and blows to cool the water.

MOUSSA
It was. The Israeli Army claims they didn't know his wife and child were in the car, but we know how accurate those investigations are. He was a friend and I was very close with his family.

Moussa points to the envelope on the table.

MOUSSA (CONT'D)
Enough about this tragedy. This is for your family, Tarik. Put it towards the house.

Tarik looks at the envelope. Hamzi enters from the living room.

MOUSSA (CONT'D)
Everyone with damages receives some.

TARIK
Where is it from?

MOUSSA
It's from your local leaders.

TARIK
We can't accept that.

MUHUMMAD
What are you talking about?

AISHE
Don't be rude, Tarik.

Miriam and Tarik look at each other.

MOUSSA
Thank you for the tea.

Tarik picks up the envelope and follows Moussa outside.

EXT. ABU-KHDEIR HOME - CONTINUOUS

Tarik exits the house to find Moussa flanked by two GUARDS, who stand at casual, but serious attention with semi-automatic rifles.

MOUSSA
I understand you are upset about last night. So am I. But I came to check on your family, to help you. We cannot live with our homes falling apart.

TARIK
I don't like envelopes.

MOUSSA
Tarik, try to understand-we cannot settle on taking Israeli money. Our own money is just as good.

TARIK
I work for what I got.

Tarik hands him the envelope.

MOUSSA
I'm just trying to help. Take care
of that ear.

Moussa walks off with the two guards past the burned-out car,
smoke still emanating.

Tarik looks at the damages in his home. Then at the hole in
the side of the neighboring home, bombed out and empty
inside.

Tarik picks up a brick, inspects it.

EXT. BOMBED OUT HOME - MOMENTS LATER

With his open palm, Tarik punches out a section of bricks
from a collapsing wall. He begins taking handfuls of bricks,
placing them into a wheelbarrow, then stacking the bricks
against his family's home.

Miriam comes out and watches him. Muhummad and Hamzi follow
and watch Tarik.

MUHUMMAD
What are you doing?

TARIK
These bricks are still good.

HAMZI
Are you crazy? They've been
bombed!

MUHUMMAD
Did you take the money?

TARIK
No.

Hamzi rushes at Tarik, but Muhummad holds him back.

MUHUMMAD
Don't you get it? If we don't get
the money or we have to sell the
truck!

Tarik continues loading bricks. Muhammad pushes Hamzi away. Miriam watches for a moment before going inside. Tarik turns away from them and makes another trip with the wheelbarrow.

INT. ROOF CRAWL SPACE - LATER

A HAMMER pounds upwards at a thin wall of sheet rock. White dust coats Tarik's hair and shirt as he pounds away. WHACK - sunlight streams through at the edges. WHACK and more LIGHT.

EXT. ABU-KHDEIR FAMILY ROOF - LATER

Tarik's hands on A HANDSAW teething away at a piece of wood being cut to size.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tarik places the wood into the blown-out window.

Nails POUND into the corners of the window frame.

Tarik sweeps up the chards of glass littering the floor. He heads up the ladder to the roof.

EXT. ABU-KHDEIR FAMILY ROOF - LATER

Tarik sits near the edge of the roof looking out. The afternoon CALL TO PRAYER fills up the silence.

A HAND on Tarik's shoulder.

MIRIAM

I was yelling from downstairs - I guess you couldn't hear me. How's your ear?

He shrugs. She looks at him, crosses her arms.

MIRIAM

What are we going to do for money? This fight with your family is never going to stop unless we are on our own.

TARIK

I'll find a way.

MIRIAM
Doing what.

TARIK
Whatever I have to do.

MIRIAM
So will I.

TARIK
I can't take the money. My dad
could have been an olympic boxer,
but he started fighting for money.
We've seen too many envelopes.

MIRIAM
Moussa's just trying to help.

TARIK
He's changed.

MIRIAM
It's the same Moussa, though.

TARIK
It's not - there is something in
his eyes.

MIRIAM
He's doing something. He's taking
action.

Tarik steals a look at her.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
Isaaq doesn't want to sleep in the
room now, so I'll stay with him in
the living room.

TARIK
Okay.

MIRIAM
Thank you for fixing the window.

Tarik watches Miriam disappear down the hole in the roof. He
holds his RINGING ear and grimaces.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

Tarik stands on the opposite corner from the big group of day laborers waiting for work.

TARIK'S POV - His father and brother among the workers, their hands raised, pushing and pulling to be picked.

Tarik walks away.

OMITTED

EXT. ABU-KHDEIR'S STREET - LATER

Tarik walks the narrow streets, the refugee camps like a maze. Children stick their heads out of doors to play and peer.

INT. ABU-KHDEIR HOME - CONTINUOUS

Tarik stands in the kitchen to a quiet home.

TARIK
Anybody home? Miriam? Mama?

Tarik listens for a response.

EXT. SCHOOL HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Tarik arrives outside the school. There are no waiting parents or children playing in the yard.

INT. SCHOOL HOUSE - SAME

Tarik enters the front office of the school. A SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR, a young woman wearing hijab, sits at the front desk.

TARIK
I'm looking for my son?

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR
The kids went to the rally.

TARIK

Rally?

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

The field behind the Recreation
Center up Sala'din Road.

Tarik walks out of the office.

EXT. REC. CENTER FIELD - DAY

A crowd of parents and people watch the school children sing.
Tarik locates Miriam in the crowd and stands next to her.

MIRIAM

You found us. Cute, right?

Isaaq, singing, waves to Tarik. Tarik notices Moussa off to
the side of the kids with his Guards (sans guns) and a
delegation of men and women. Moussa holds a shovel.

The kids finish up to light applause.

MOUSSA

We are here today to celebrate the
new direction of our country. It
starts in our clinics and hospitals
and places like this where we can
be safe from missiles and bombs.
This recreation center and many of
our civic and public places need to
be rehabilitated. We need to fix
the things that are broken.

Tarik scans the crowd of people - their rapt attention of
Moussa.

MOUSSA (CONT'D)

Our children deserve a place to
learn and grow. A place to become
the next generation of Palestinian
leaders. If we start here there
will be nothing to stop us from
reclaiming our country from
Zionists.

The crowd claps.

MOUSSA (CONT'D)

We break ground today at the site
of a building that will be rebuilt.
It starts here!

The shovel goes into the ground. Miriam, other parents, and the children clap. Tarik looks toward the Rec Center.

EXT. REC. CENTER FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

A skinny, slow kid, WALEED, 18, stands at the back doors of the rec center. Tarik approaches away from the big group across the field.

TARIK

No more soccer games?

WALEED

Not anymore, I guess. We have
balls inside. Want to see?

They enter the doors.

INT. REC. CENTER GYM - CONTINUOUS

The SOUND of a bird flapping it's wings in the rafters, the white noise of a television coming from the back.

TARIK

I didn't know anybody still worked
here.

WALEED

Me and my dad live here too.

TARIK

When did they stop training people
here?

WALEED

You mean my dad?

Dust is kicked up with every step. The ropes on the old ring sway. Tarik moves towards the door he entered.

OMAR (O.S.)

It seems to be visitors day today.

Tarik turns around and sees an unkempt man - skull cap over a closely shaved head, unshaven face, a collared shirt under two layers of sweaters - this is OMAR, 60.

TARIK
Just looking around.

OMAR
You with the politicians?

TARIK
No. I used to come here when I was younger. Me and my brother, Hamzi Abu-Khdeir.

OMAR
I remember you. You were the smarter and controlled one. But definitely one in a family of quitters.

TARIK
My dad needed us to work.

OMAR
Excuses, excuses.

Omar steps forward into a shaft of light pouring through a hole in the roof.

OMAR (CONT'D)
They come every election. "We'll fix this" and "we'll fix that". We'll see. They would have demolished it earlier if we didn't live here.

Tarik puts his palm against the light punching bag and swings it.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Never enough money to fix it or tear it down. I guess your politician friends found some money.

TARIK
They're just trying to do something.

OMAR
What are you trying to do?

TARIK
I came for my kid.

OMAR
No, I mean with that punching bag.
You look like you want to punch it.

TARIK
What?

OMAR
You deaf? Or just slow like my
son? Go ahead - punch it. Could
be your last chance. Go ahead.

Tarik looks at the punching bag. Omar makes a fist and mock punches the air.

The doors to the field open up as Isaaq and a group of other kids stream in.

Moussa enters the Rec Center with his delegation of men, parents and kids following. Miriam walks over to Tarik.

MIRIAM
Kind of sad.

TARIK
Yeah.

MIRIAM
It smells awful in here.

Tarik watches as Omar slinks away into the back of the Rec. Center.

MOUSSA
This will not only be a place for
exercise. It will be a learning
center - a place for children to go
after school.

Moussa leads people around the boxing ring. Tarik stands at the back of the group.

MOUSSA (CONT'D)
We will have a beautiful gymnasium
for all sports.
(MORE)

MOUSSA (CONT'D)

They can box if they want, but this is an institution. Along with athletics, there will be desks for health education and learning.

The group continues on with Moussa leading them around the gym.

OMITTED

OMITTED

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Tarik stands at the bathroom door - half inside the bedroom. Miriam sits close to Isaaq, drawing.

MIRIAM

Moussa needs a secretary a couple of days a week.

TARIK

You'll finally get to be in politics.

MIRIAM

It's his medical work too. It's for us, Tarik.

Tarik begins to exit.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

TARIK

Going out for a bit.

She watches him go.

EXT. STREET - EARLY EVENING

Tarik stalks the narrow, winding streets.

He begins RUNNING - charging forward as it becomes darker and the streets clear of people.

EXT. ROAD - LATER

Tarik runs on a street outside the city, stops, lets out a deep breath. His shoulders drop. He turns around and begins running home.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET MARKETS - DAY

Tarik lifts large, canvas bags off the back of a truck plopping the last one down on a large pyramid in the rear of a fruit and vegetable stand. The FRUIT STAND MANAGER inspects.

FRUIT STAND MANAGER
Finished?

Tarik nods. The man pulls out a couple of bills and some coins.

TARIK
That's all?

FRUIT STAND MANAGER
I'm sorry, Tarik.

TARIK
Need help tomorrow?

FRUIT STAND MANAGER
Don't think so. Next week maybe.

TARIK
Thanks.

Tarik walks away.

INT. REC. CENTER GYM - DAY

Tarik enters through the front doors of the Gym. It's quiet and dark.

TARIK
Hello?

Tarik removes his hooded sweatshirt and walks around the gym. He hits a light switch, but the light bulb is dead.

He walks back into the dark hallway and sees the door cracked open to Omar's room. Omar is asleep fully clothed.

Tarik opens the tiny utility closet and locates old cleaning supplies.

INT. REC. CENTER GYM - LATER

Tarik sweeps up at the open back door of the gym where trash and junk is piled up. Dust blows out through the door.

INT. REC. CENTER GYM - LATER

Tarik wipes the grime on the front plate-glass windows with a sopping towel. Water streams down.

OMAR (O.S.)
What are you doing?

Tarik turns to Omar who stands with Waleed.

OMAR (CONT'D)
This isn't a beauty parlor.
There's sweat on those windows been
there for years.

TARIK
Smells like it.

WALEED
You can see outside!

OMAR
Who told you to do that?

TARIK
Nobody.

Tarik continues cleaning, ignoring them.

INT. REC. CENTER GYM - LATER

Tarik mops the floors under the windows. Then around the old ring. He backs up into the worn, red leather speed bag, turning around to notice it, continues mopping.

EXT. REC. CENTER FIELD - LATER

Tarik kicks a soccer ball across the field.

Across from the field, some young boys skirt the edges of the street.

TARIK
(Yelling)
Want to play?

The boys race each other to the ball and begin kicking it around playfully. Tarik watches them and when they get closer they include him.

EXT. ABU-KHDEIR ROOF - LATE AFTERNOON

Tarik holds onto ropes connected to a flat, wood palette on the ground below. He looks over the edge where Isaaq stands looking up.

TARIK
Get on.

Isaaq stands on the palette.

Tarik pulls and the ropes squeak. Isaaq holds on tightly as he slowly rises and then back to the ground. Tarik releases the ropes and looks over the edge of the roof.

EXT. ABU-KHDEIR'S STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Bricks are stacked onto the wooden palette. Tarik TUGS on the ropes.

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - DAYS LATER

A boy dribbles a soccer ball, goes to make a move and is illegally swept by another boy.

Tarik blows the whistle hanging around his neck.

The tripped player stands and takes an errant swing. The players begin wrestling each other, Tarik runs in to break them up.

TARIK
No fighting. It's just a game.

The boys separate. Tarik puts the whistle back in his mouth and blows.

INT. REC. CENTER GYM - LATER

Tarik cleans up and watches the last few kids exit. He looks up after hearing VOICES in the front of the gym-

-TARIK'S POV - Omar stands near the front windows with SELAH, 65, cigarette in hand, nicely tailored shirt covered by a canvas jacket, surrounded by other Fatah men. Selah hands Omar an ENVELOPE. Omar looks to notice Tarik's watching eyes. Selah and his men exit the front door of the Rec Center.

BACK TO SCENE - Tarik pretends not to see, finishes putting field equipment away.

Omar walks over towards Tarik

OMAR
You like being a referee?

TARIK
It's something to do.

Tarik looks at Omar's pocket.

OMAR
Referees get pushed and pulled all around. Think they have power, but they're just tools.

Tarik turns his good ear toward Omar.

OMAR (CONT'D)
You think I'm just some old loser who does nothing. What have they done? Nothing.

TARIK
I don't know what you're talking about.

OMAR
You're not a total fool, but you're definitely a pawn.

TARIK
And you're not?

OMAR
You know chess?

TARIK
Just because I want to ref the
kids, do something around here -
I'm a pawn?

OMAR
Whatever you want to call it-
referee, a janitor cleaning up
messes-you're getting used same as
everybody. So, out you go.

Omar walks into the dark hallway towards his bedroom.

TARIK
I'm getting used?

Tarik turns to leave, stops at the punching bag, and
unleashes his RIGHT. The burly bag rattles. Tarik THROWS
ANOTHER. The bag goes back further and swings toward Tarik
who unleashes A LEFT.

Omar watches from the shadows.

Tarik PUNCHES-A SWATH of BLOOD shows on the bag. Tarik
punches AGAIN.

Omar walks quickly behind Tarik and holds him back.

OMAR
Take it easy.

Tarik breaks free and walks out the front doors of the gym,
hands clinched into fists.

OMAR
Hey-

Omar looks at the blood marks on the bag.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Tarik washes his hands under the cold water in his sink - the
pink hue of watered down blood. Isaaq enters the bathroom.

ISAAQ
Are you all right?

TARIK
Get me a towel.

Isaaq runs off. Tarik squeezes his eyes, shrinks to his knee.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tarik dries off part of his hands on a towel.

TARIK
Where's mom?

ISAAQ
At work.

INT. MOUSSA'S OFFICE - DAY

Tarik enters the busy office to find Miriam sitting at the receptionist table.

MIRIAM
What are you doing here? What happened?

TARIK
Can I see Moussa?

Amidst aides and bodyguards in his back office, Moussa looks up from his work and sees Tarik.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Moussa unwraps the towel around Tarik's hand.

MOUSSA
Can you flex your hand?

Tarik slowly brings the hand into a fist.

MOUSSA (CONT'D)
It's good you stopped the bleeding.
Hold on.

Moussa opens the office door and pokes his head out. He returns to Tarik.

A NURSE enters with some gauze, scissors, etc. Moussa cleans up around the wound and puts some ointment on it. Begins dressing it with bandage.

MOUSSA
It'll sting a little, like a burn.
Rub this ointment on it for a
couple of days. What happened?
Fighting walls?

Moussa looks at Tarik, but focuses on the bandaging.

TARIK
Nothing.

MOUSSA
I hope somebody was not at the
other end of this.

TARIK
No. Just an accident.

MOUSSA
Miriam is doing well. It's not a
favor that I hired her. She is a
skilled person and believes in what
we're doing.

Tarik looks at his padded fist.

MOUSSA
It seems that I see you only when
you're bleeding. Perhaps we can do
something peaceful together.
Dinner with our families. Let me
know if the hand continues
bothering you.

Moussa nods as Tarik is lead out and the door closed behind him.

INT. ABU-KHDEIR FAMILY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tarik sits drinking coffee, Isaaq next to him. Miriam sits across.

MIRIAM
Will you tell me how that happened?

TARIK
It's nothing.

MIRIAM
Doesn't look like nothing-

A KNOCK on the door. Miriam goes to answer. Tarik looks up to find Omar with Waleed at his side.

OMAR
Good evening.

ISAAQ
Good evening.

OMAR
Sorry to come so late.

MIRIAM
Please sit.

Omar and Waleed sit.

WALEED
Is there anything to eat?

OMAR
Waleed! This is not a restaurant.

WALEED
You said we would have dinner.

MIRIAM
I'll bring you both something.

Miriam looks at Tarik as she exits.

OMAR
Is your brother here?

TARIK
No. He lives with his wife's family down the street. They eat here sometimes, but they left.

Omar relaxes a little.

OMAR

I came to discuss what you owe me
for fouling up my punching bag.
Those bags are expensive.

TARIK

Don't mess with me. What do you
want?

OMAR

What do you want? You're the one
hanging around my gym.

TARIK

You crazy-

Miriam enters and puts fresh bread and salad on the table.
Waleed eats immediately. Omar waits and looks at Tarik.

TARIK

Eat some.

Omar waves it off. He pulls out a nail clipper, begins
working on his thumb, and notices Tarik watching.

OMAR

An old friend gave them to me.
Don't worry, I won't get it on your
floor. It's just to help from
biting them. Nervous habit.

Tarik shakes his head.

OMAR (CONT'D)

You don't have any?

TARIK

I clinch my jaw.

OMAR

Do you wake up with headaches?

TARIK

All the time.

OMAR

I do too. The trick is to relax
your tongue and your jaw at night
before you go to sleep.

(MORE)

OMAR (cont'd)
And then, this is the easy part,
take all of life's problems and
stop thinking about them. It's
very simple.

Tarik hints at a smile. Omar smiles, sits back in the chair
and looks at his fingers.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Sounded like thunder when you hit
that bag yesterday. It's a good
sound. Been a long time since I
heard that. Boxing is a good
release.

TARIK
Release from what?

OMAR
Life's problems.

TARIK
It solves your problems?

OMAR
Helps. You ever run?

TARIK
Sometimes.

OMAR
It's good for your heart and mind.

TARIK
So you just want to go running
together?

OMAR
Think about it. We could start at
the gym and run around town. 6:30
AM, if you're interested.

Omar stands and pats Waleed on the shoulder. They exit.

OMAR (O.S.)
(To Miriam)
Thank you so very much. Peace to
you and your family and good night.

The door closes.

MIRIAM
What does he want?

TARIK
To go running with me.

MIRIAM
Strange old man. What's wrong with his son?

TARIK
A bit slow.

MIRIAM
He's not married?

TARIK
Must have been. They live in the Rec. Center. I don't think he trained anybody else after Hamzi.

INT. BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Tarik rises from bed and dresses in the dark.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tarik looks over Miriam and Isaaq curled up on the small couch together.

EXT. REC. CENTER - EARLY MORNING

Tarik PULLS on the front door of the Rec. Center - locked.

EXT. REC. CENTER FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Tarik PULLS on the back door - same as the front. He looks around at the semi-darkness around him.

TARIK
Omar!

Tarik sighs. He runs off.

EXT. STREET - SUNRISE

Tarik runs an even pace on a quiet road just outside of town.

A CAR MOTOR REVS behind Tarik forcing him to veer to the side of the road. The car pulls up alongside, the passenger side window rolls down to reveal Waleed with Omar at the wheel of an old, diesel Mercedes.

OMAR

A blessed morning to you!

Tarik breathes hard and nods.

OMAR (CONT'D)

Nice morning for a run.

TARIK

I thought we were supposed to meet at the gym.

OMAR

Car was at the shop.

TARIK

What about running.

OMAR

Nah, not for me. How many miles so far? 3?

TARIK

Don't know.

OMAR

23 more for a marathon.

TARIK

You run marathons?

OMAR

Nah. You could though. Let me know when you want to turn back.

Tarik continues running. The road bends and falls downhill, with Omar keeping a constant speed at his heels.

EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE THE CITY - LATER MORNING

Tarik reaches the top of the hill to a flat, dusty vista with Omar following steadily behind. Tarik looks ahead at the road in the distance and stops-

ANGLE ON A PITCH BLACK EARTH MOVER moving concrete pillars onto the road. Two ISRAELI JEEPS are parked nearby with TROOPS protecting the area.

Omar comes up behind Tarik and places a hand on his shoulder.

OMAR
Let's head back.

Tarik breaks his gaze, turns around, and begins running as Omar gets back in the car to follow.

CUT TO:

EXT. REC. CENTER FIELD - LATER

Tarik eases his running as the Mercedes speeds around him and parks.

Tarik paces to catch his breath, his face tightens, he leans down and vomits.

OMAR
(Watching him)
Good run.

They enter the Rec. Center.

INT. REC CENTER GYM - CONTINUOUS

Tarik walks over to the punching bag and sees the blood still decorating it.

OMAR
(From behind Tarik)
Why don't we just leave it. There's a reason it's there.

Tarik looks around.

OMAR (CONT'D)
What do you want to do now?

TARIK
I don't know.

OMAR
You still don't know?

Tarik stumbles.

OMAR (CONT'D)
What are you doing here?

TARIK
What do you want me to say?

OMAR
That you want to fight. We fight something everyday-traffic, the weather, the people we love, the Israelis. But we can actually put our hands up and do something about it.

TARIK
I want to fight.

OMAR
Why?

TARIK
Because it's the only thing I know how to do.

OMAR
Damn, they've beat you down, haven't they.

Omar paces. Tarik sits on a bench.

OMAR
Waleed, help Tarik tape up his hands.

Waleed fetches the tape and supplies and TEARS a section of tape. He wraps around Tarik's wrists and over the palms in the space between thumb and forefinger, over and over.

OMAR (CONT'D)
When it comes to boxing I want to be the best. I've won championships.
(MORE)

OMAR (CONT'D)
I've been to the top. That is the
only place I want to be.

TARIK
I want that.

OMAR
You'll have to convince me, but you
need to convince yourself first.

Waleed covers Tarik's bandaged hand with tape.

IN FRONT of the speed bag, Tarik begins punching with the
flat part of his fist-

RAT-A-TAT-A-TAT-A-TAT-A-
-STOPS.

TARIK
My hand is still sore.

OMAR
(Shrugs)
You're not a kid anymore.

Tarik begins again-

RAT-A-TAT-ATTA-TAT-ATTA-TAT-ATTA-TAT-A-
-STOPS. Sweat beads on Tarik's forehead.

OMAR
Find it.

Tarik finds the rhythm.

INT. GYM - LATER

Tarik is seated, removing tape from his injured hand. Omar
walks down the dark hallway to his back room. The BACK DOOR
swings open as a few kids enter.

KID
Where is the soccer ball?

Tarik stands to retrieve a ball. THE SOUND OF BEEPING AND A
TRUCK'S HYDRAULICS can be heard off-screen.

EXT. REC. CENTER FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Tarik looks at the far end of the Rec. Center field where an old, yellow CATERPILLAR BULL DOZER is moved from the back of a flatbed truck onto the soccer field.

KID

They're going to leave that there?

TARIK

I don't know. We can't play today.

The kids turn and go.

INT. REC. CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

Tarik walks the back hallway where the television blares. He finds Omar sitting and watching.

TARIK

Goodbye, Omar.

OMAR

See you in the morning. Don't wear yourself out on the run over.

Omar takes out an OLD, SILVER STOPWATCH.

OMAR (CONT'D)

This stopwatch used to be everything to me. I was the master of time in this gym. But what's the point, Tarik? It doesn't work anymore. Good night.

Omar stands and SLAMS the door.

TARIK

Thank-

Tarik throws on his hooded sweatshirt.

EXT. ROOF - SUNDOWN

Tarik stirs up a bucket of masonry concrete. He lays down the first row of bricks on the roof. He slaps the concrete down and begins laying the second row on top.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Miriam and Isaaq exit begin to exit when Miriam looks at Tarik sitting up on the bed.

MIRIAM
Go and lay down Isaaq.

Isaaq exits.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
You know today Moussa put his name up for election. His campaign officially starts tomorrow.

TARIK
That's good. He can go around and knock down buildings and give people money officially.

MIRIAM
He wants to improve our lives, Tarik. He wants to end this occupation.

TARIK
How?

MIRIAM
At least he's not running away.

She exits to the living room. Tarik closes the door, and turns out the light.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. REC. CENTER GYM - EARLY MORNING

Tarik enters the front doors.

At the back table sits Omar and a 50 year old man, fit, wearing modern eyeglasses, and athletic jacket-this is EMANUEL "EMAN" ASHER.

Standing near the front window is a young man, just under Tarik's age, who turns around, this is JACOB. Tarik approaches.

JACOB
(In Hebrew)
Hello.

TARIK
(Also in Hebrew)
Hello.

JACOB
Is this your gym?

TARIK
Yeah.

JACOB
It's crazy man. I've never seen a
gym like this. Who are your
favorite boxers?

TARIK
Favorite? I don't know.

JACOB
You know Jake LaMotta?

TARIK
No.

JACOB
How about Sugar Ray Robinson?

TARIK
A little bit. I like Muhammad Ali.
I've seen Mike Tyson fight too.

JACOB
Eman makes us watch old fights at
our gym.

TARIK
You're a boxer?

JACOB
Yeah.

OMAR
Come on over Tarik. This is Eman.

Eman sizes up Tarik and nods.

EMAN

Jacob's the up and coming kid in Israel. Omar says we can do a little bout to promote peace. Why you'd that through boxing nobody knows. Omar's an old friend, so we'd like to meet you. Are you interested in peace talks?

TARIK

I don't know.

EMAN

I've never seen you fight, so I have to take Omar's word that you have talent. You're not some street tough, right?

TARIK

A what?

EMAN

You're not a dirty fighter.

TARIK

I fight as clean as the other guy.

JACOB

I fight clean.

TARIK

How do I know?

OMAR

Yeah, how do we know he's going to fight clean?

EMAN

You questioning my guy?

OMAR

You questioned my guy, Eman.

JACOB

(Pointing at Tarik)

You want me to show you how clean I am?

Tarik stands up face to face with Jacob. The trainer's stand and get close.

Eman and Omar wink at each other.

TARIK
Is this for peace? Or for money?

EMAN
We don't want a professional bout,
because we have Olympic ambitions.
It's the same for you guys, right?

TARIK
I don't know.

Tarik and Omar look at each other.

OMAR
Money doesn't matter to me.

EMAN
After the fight, you can think
about your future.

TARIK
Where do we fight?

EMAN
We have to fight in Tel Aviv. But
we'll take care of you.

TARIK
Fight in Israel?

Tarik and Omar exchanges looks.

EMAN
Think about it. Call me. We'll
set up the date, take care of
everything.

Eman pushes Jacob out of the Rec Center. Omar pats Tarik on the chest to calm him, laughs and shakes his head.

OMAR
Want to run?

INT. ROAD - DAY

Tarik runs with his hood on, his usual route and routine. Omar follows behind him in the Mercedes, Waleed in the passenger seat. Tarik plows up a hill.

INT. BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Tarik finishes stretching his legs. He rubs his temples and jaw and tries to relax his face. He sits up and begins dressing. The sun is barely up.

EXT. STRETCH OF ROAD - LATER

Tarik finishes the climb up the hill to find Omar waiting at the long stretch of road. In the distance is Waleed.

OMAR

In a fight you need to be able to run the whole marathon and at points run a fast mile.

TARIK

You said you never ran a marathon?

OMAR

Yeah, yeah, yeah, but what do you want? War metaphors? Let's see you sprint.

Omar points out Waleed standing fifty yards down the stretch. Waleed waves.

OMAR (CONT'D)

Run down to Waleed. It's about forty yards. Don't let up.

Tarik takes off for Waleed and back.

OMAR (CONT'D)

Take a breath and go. Go.

Tarik takes off and back his lungs heave a little more.

OMAR

Breathe, man.

Tarik regains his breath.

Omar allows him to rest for one moment. Tarik looks at a smiling Omar.

OMAR

Again.

Tarik takes off and we are with him on his run, the SOUND OF HIS RAPID BREATH as he accelerates back to Omar. Tarik's lungs heave in and out.

OMAR

One more.

He gets into position ready to go again.

INT. GYM - LATER

Tarik drinks from a bottle of water. Omar looks out the clean windows as people and traffic pass by.

OMAR

Why don't you step in the ring.

Tarik ducks under the single rope to enter the ring, begins moving around and throwing a couple of punches and moving side-to-side.

OMAR (CONT'D)

Be loose. Mind your feet.

Tarik sidesteps around the length of the ring, then moves forward and back quickly.

OMAR

Don't worry about the hands. Just the feet. I love that sound.

The gym is filled with the sound of Tarik's shuffling feet.

INT. REC. CENTER GYM - LATER

Tarik dresses to go home.

OMAR

Do you trust me?

TARIK

(thinking)

Yes.

OMAR

You want this fight?

TARIK

Yes.

OMAR
You know what it could lead to?
Good and bad?

TARIK
Yes. I want the fight.

EXT. SCHOOL HOUSE - DAYS LATER

Tarik arrives at the school yard. Kids are playing ball and different games. Tarik watches Isaaq playing with a group of boys.

Isaaq is put in the middle of a group of boys and pushed around. One boy shoves him hard and knocks Isaaq down. Isaaq stands and punches at the boy. The boy falls and Isaaq jumps on top and swings away.

Tarik moves in, along with a teacher, to break up the skirmish. Tarik lifts Isaaq up with both hands and holds him back.

TARIK
What are you doing?

The boy that was underneath Isaaq cries. Isaaq looks at the adults and kids staring and begins crying. Tarik takes him by the arm and walks off from the school yard.

EXT. ROOF - SUNDOWN

Tarik stirs up a bucket of masonry concrete. The brick wall is as high as his knees. The concrete is slapped on, a brick follows, and the excess wiped away.

Isaaq watches with his head in his hands.

TARIK
You shouldn't fight.

ISAAQ
You fight.

TARIK
Not on the street. Not to hurt anybody. Bring me those bricks over there.

ISAAQ

No.

Tarik looks heatedly toward Isaaq who finally picks up bricks with his small hands. Tarik grabs his hands with the bricks.

TARIK

We're building this roof together,
right?

Isaaq nods. Tarik takes the bricks. Isaaq goes for another handful.

INT. REC CENTER GYM - DAY

Tarik ducks and weaves under a rope. Waleed holds a pad up for Tarik to punch on one side and alternates with Tarik every so often on each side of the rope.

OMAR

Time!

Tarik stops and drinks from a bottle of water.

The main doors of the Rec Center open and in walks Hamzi in his exercise clothes with Muhammad following. Tarik looks to Omar. Hamzi takes off a couple of layers, sits down and begins wrapping his hands in tape.

Tarik drops his head.

OMAR

Who else would you spar with? Not
me.

Angle on the front doors as Selah, the politician, walks in to the gym with a couple of his men.

OMAR

I didn't invite them.

SELAH

Just here to see the talent this
gym is producing.

Tarik stands, takes off his sweatshirt and begins wrapping his hands in tape.

Hamzi stretches out his arms and jumps up and down to loosen up. Omar hands Hamzi a head guard.

INT. RING - LATER

Tarik guards his reddened face with his gloves when a PUNCH comes from under his gloves or over top of them. Hamzi backs Tarik up into the corners and pounds at his stomach.

Muhummad sits back and watches, smoking. Omar refs inside the ring.

OMAR
C'mon Tarik, move. Break out of
it. 10 seconds.

Tarik breaks away and throws jabs to keep Hamzi back.

OMAR (CONT'D)
There you go.

Hamzi avoids a jab and sticks Tarik right in the side. Tarik flinches.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Time!

The brothers go to separate corners. Waleed gives Tarik some water and splashes it in his face.

Omar gives water to Hamzi.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Doing good. Keep on his toes this
round, trip him up and stay in
front of him.

Omar walks to Tarik. Tarik breathes hard in exhaustion.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Tired?

TARIK
I'm fine.

OMAR
Marathon. Let's go.

The two brothers stand.

OMAR
Time!

Tarik and Hamzi touch gloves to begin the round. Hamzi throws an upper-cut to Tarik's side and it lands with an ugly thud. Tarik slinks back to the ropes in pain. Hamzi barrels forward to keep pounding away at Tarik's gut.

MUHUMMAD

Come on Tarik!

Tarik looks off to see that his father is watching, visibly frustrated. Omar throws his hands up in frustration.

The punches and slaps from Hamzi's gloves don't stop.

OMAR

Time!

CORNERS. Omar comes over and looks at Tarik.

TARIK

He knows all of my weak spots.

OMAR

What about his? Quit acting like his little brother and exploit him. Let's go. Time.

Hamzi steps in front of Tarik to block his movement and Tarik counters with the same footwork and a punch to Hamzi's weak side.

Hamzi locks him up and BUTTS HEADS with Tarik.

TARIK

Watch the head butt.

HAMZI

You watch it.

OMAR

Hold it. Corners!

(to Hamzi)

Watch it.

(quietly to Tarik)

Keep going after him.

The brothers step out of their corners.

TARIK

Watch the head butts.

HAMZI
Watch me knock you out.

OMAR
Keep it clean.

Hamzi comes toward Tarik southpaw and Tarik is immediately thrown.

He dances the other way and Hamzi leads with the left and comes in close to land a couple of shots to Tarik's body. Their arms lock and Hamzi butts Tarik's head lightly.

SELAH (O.S.)
A wrestling match!

Selah and his men laugh.

Tarik punches out, notices Hamzi's left hand lead.

The SOUNDS in the Rec. Center become deafening for Tarik, his face becoming angry. Hamzi comes toward him slowly.

Tarik fakes right, moves left, winds up a LEFT CROSS directly to Hamzi's head-THUD. Hamzi falls sideways and to his knee. Tarik stands over him about to strike again.

Omar pushes Tarik back, puts a hand on Hamzi's shoulder.

Tarik falls back to his corner.

HAMZI
I'm fine!

OMAR
Let's call it a day.

HAMZI
I can keep going.

Hamzi stands up, but is met by Omar.

OMAR
That's it. Nobody gets hurt.

Hamzi begins ripping off his gloves and taking off his head guard.

EXT. GYM - MOMENTS LATER

Hamzi puts on his street clothes as he watches Tarik dress as well.

HAMZI

It was lucky. I left myself open.

TARIK

I wasn't trying to hurt you.

HAMZI

(Grabbing Tarik)

You think I'm hurt?

TARIK

Get off me.

HAMZI

I'm not hurt.

Omar and Muhummad hover nearby. Tarik takes Hamzi's shirt and grabs him back. Hamzi is off balance and releases Tarik, grabs his stuff and walks out.

MUHUMMAD

He doesn't mean it, Tarik.

Muhummad exits. Selah comes over.

SELAH

You're a picture of Palestine, young man. Healthy. Tough. You would have to be tough to beat your own brother.

(Moving along the ropes)

But you have a wild man training you. Isn't that right, Omar?

OMAR

I've been called worse.

SELAH

You are a fine trainer, Omar, but a terrible politician. You and your Israeli friends are causing trouble all over. Fortunately, the only danger it will cause will be for you two.

OMAR

All we did was find a good fight
for Tarik. It's got nothing to do
with politics.

SELAH

That's very cute. Good luck
selling that to your friends around
town.

Selah lights a cigarette and exits the door being held by one
of his men.

Omar takes a towel and dries off the headgear.

OMAR (CONT'D)

We won't be using this anymore.

Omar throws the headgear in a shelf.

OMAR (CONT'D)

You're a finisher Tarik. The
potential to knock anybody out.

Tarik watches Omar disappear into the back room. He is alone
beside the ring.

INT. MOUSSA'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Tarik and Isaaq sit across the table from Moussa, and
Moussa's father, FAREED, 60, an older, humble version of
Moussa.

MOUSSA

I saw you running the other day and
wondered why you were running.

TARIK

It's for endurance.

MOUSSA

I would think it's important to
just practice punching. But I
understand.

Moussa grabs a plate and passes it.

Miriam, wearing hijab, brings a plate out and catches eyes
with Tarik, before disappearing back into the kitchen.

MOUSSA

Miriam is a wonderful addition to our office.

TARIK

She is happy to be working.

MOUSSA

Things are changing here and we are right out in front. But I know you don't like politics.

TARIK

Politics is the way it is. I don't like the fighting, the war.

MOUSSA

A boxer who doesn't like fighting.

TARIK

Boxing is just a sport.

MOUSSA

So are politics. Just be careful to tell the two apart. Men can walk away after a fight. Politics can mean lives.

Tarik nods, looks through the hallway into the back kitchen to see Miriam talking closely with Moussa's wife, FATIMA, 23, who wears the Hijab covering her hair.

MOUSSA (CONT'D)

I am glad to hear you're spending time at the recreation center. You can help increase the youth presence there. I hope you enjoy it before we tear it down.

INT. MOUSSA'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Tarik sits nearby with Isaaq sitting quietly on the couch.

MOUSSA

It's not a requirement I make, but I let the women choose. Islam is our guiding light, not just in our struggle, but in our daily life. Don't you use Islam when you fight?

TARIK
I haven't fought yet.

MOUSSA
Use your faith. You want to be honest with yourself, right? You have to remember where you come from? That's why you fight in a center ring, right? To show your true self. We don't want to seem like collaborators.

Tarik nods, his eyes unblinking.

MOUSSA (CONT'D)
I understand how religion reaches people, but the question is - how do we teach the children about Palestine? To get each generation to learn that Jerusalem is our capital and we will fight for it against the Israelis and anybody else who occupies it.

Tarik rubs his hands together.

MOUSSA (CONT'D)
The children need to learn. Isn't it like boxing? Teach the fundamentals and as they learn more they understand the bigger picture? Come here Isaaq.

Isaaq looks at his father. Tarik nods at Isaaq.

MOUSSA (CONT'D)
Come here child.

Isaaq moves across the room from next to Tarik to Moussa.

MOUSSA
The children will learn the fallacies of Israel. About American aggression against our people.
(to Isaaq)
Who has taken your land?

ISAAQ
Israel.

MOUSSA

Will you be a martyr someday for
your country?

Isaaq nods.

TARIK

Moussa, he's just a kid. He
doesn't know what it means.

MOUSSA

But that's my point. If these
children learn to take the biggest
risks young, we have a generation
of fighters. Like you.

Miriam enters the room with another tray and sees her son on
display, smiles at Moussa and Tarik.

Tarik motions for Isaaq to come back to him. Isaaq is frozen
until Moussa eases up his light grip on his arm and goes back
towards Tarik. Miriam offers coffee to Tarik. Tarik
declines.

MIRIAM

Everybody is having some.

Tarik takes the coffee and holds it.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Tarik washes his face and when the soap clears he looks at
himself in the mirror, inspecting the rough angle on his
nose, the slight bruising under his left eye, the dark bags
under his eyes.

Miriam enters the bathroom.

TARIK

I'm almost finished.

Tarik towels off his wet face.

MIRIAM

You look tired.

TARIK

So do you.

MIRIAM
Maybe you're tired from not telling
me the truth.

Tarik walks out.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

MIRIAM
Why are you fighting?

TARIK
Just to fight.

MIRIAM
For money?

TARIK
No.

MIRIAM
What's it for then?

TARIK
Because I want to.

MIRIAM
Did you even ask if there is money?

TARIK
Is that what's important to you?

MIRIAM
What's important to you?

TARIK
Us. Our family. And I want to
show that I can fight.

MIRIAM
An Israeli?

TARIK
It doesn't matter who it is.

MIRIAM
I don't understand what you are
doing? What this change is all
about.

Tarik stands, grabs a sweatshirt and begins walking out.

TARIK

As if I'm the one that has changed?

MIRIAM

I'm just trying to help provide for our family.

TARIK

So am I.

MIRIAM

I'm tired of struggling and just barely getting by.

TARIK

What else is there but struggle and getting by?

MIRIAM

Fool.

TARIK

What?

MIRIAM

You can't even see that we are going through while you run around, swinging away.

TARIK

I am not a fool.

MIRIAM

Fools do foolish things.

Tarik goes toward her, grabs her by the arm, and RAISES HIS FIST. Miriam covers up with her free arm.

TARIK

I am not a fool.

Tarik DROPS his fist and leaves rapidly. Miriam's mouth is left hung open, eyes wet with tears.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Tarik takes walks down the crowded camp streets with his head down. He starts running.

EXT. STRETCH OF ROAD - NIGHT

Tarik climbs up the hill where he sprinted to find the flood lights and a newly erected tower of a check point. An EARTH MOVER works in the distance.

The SOUND OF A HELICOPTER washes over everything.

Tarik looks back down at Nablus, the lights blinking in the night.

Tarik takes off running back down the hill.

EXT. REC. CENTER - NIGHT

Tarik opens up the rec center doors. He walks in and sits down in the quiet gym. He hears the SOUND of GLASS clanking together and voices coming from the soccer field in back of the Rec. Center.

EXT. REC. CENTER FIELD - CONTINUOUS

The SMASH of bottles turns his attention to the far end of the field. A group of men haul trash and recyclable material and dump it right on the field into a waist-high pile.

The truck pulls off.

TARIK
You can't dump here!

Tarik picks up a rock and THROWS it towards the truck. He picks up a glass bottle and throws it in the pile-it SHATTERS.

The SOUND of the helicopter can be heard above. Tarik walks back into the gym and closes the door to the field behind him.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tarik watches over Isaaq curled up next to Miriam on the couch, both asleep.

He lays down on the floor in his clothes, without covers.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Tarik wakes up with a shiver. Miriam opens her eyes to watch him go.

EXT. ROAD - MORNING

Tarik runs strong and fast. Omar keeps the old Mercedes further back from Tarik.

AHEAD - a giant Caterpillar earth mover places giant concrete slabs to block the road. Tarik stops.

Omar pulls up alongside. They both watch a meter ahead at the new, Israeli roadblock.

OMAR
(Yelling from the car)
Let's turn around.

Tarik stands motionless. Omar gets out and goes to Tarik.

OMAR
Don't pay attention to the
roadblocks.

TARIK
How much have they given you?

OMAR
What?

TARIK
How much money do you take?

Omar goes back to the car. Tarik follows.

TARIK (CONT'D)
The field at the rec. center is
full of trash.

Omar stops at the car door, doesn't look at Tarik.

TARIK (CONT'D)
Why would you let them do that?

OMAR
Why does anything happen in this
country? Your politician friends
say they will tear it down.

TARIK
And your politician friends want to
dump trash on it.

OMAR
If they are going to treat it like
trash then trash it.

TARIK
What is wrong with you?

OMAR
I told you before that we are
pawns!

TARIK
But you can make a choice.

OMAR
No you cannot. We have no control
over anything here.

Omar gets in the car, turns it around and begins driving
away.

Tarik watches and then begins running, following Omar.

INT. GYM - LATER

Tarik RATTLES the speed bag, ending the interval with a
severe PUNCH, which echoes in the little gym.

Omar watches as Waleed helps Tarik out of his gloves.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Tomorrow take it easy and rest.
Eat and sleep and reserve your
energy.

The gloves come off and Tarik stretches his hands, inspects
the scarred knuckles.

INT. BEDROOM - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Tarik jumps awake, sweating. His rapid breathing as loud as the RINGING in his ears. He rubs his jaw.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Tarik places a glass under the sink and drinks. From the door comes the deliberate steps and shadow of Old Moses.

MOSES

Who is there?

TARIK

Tarik.

MOSES

What's wrong?

TARIK

I couldn't sleep.

MOSES

Anxious.

Moses lets go of the doorjamb, takes a few steps into the kitchen, settling on the back of a kitchen chair.

MOSES (CONT'D)

Your father was always tired after a fight, because he stayed up all night before in anticipation. It drove me crazy.

TARIK

Maybe it's the same. Why are you up?

MOSES

Praying, thinking, trying to remember. Not much else for an old man to do.

Moses puts his arm up for Tarik to assist.

EXT. MOSES' ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tarik helps Moses onto his knees and the prayer rug.

Tarik kneels beside him.

MOSES

Prayer can offer you whatever you
want it to. Eases the burden. We
pray and bond together. We are
equal before Allah.

Tarik follows his Grandfather in the prayers.

MOSES (CONT'D)

Bisma'allah, rahman, rahmin...

Tarik closes his eyes. They bow together.

EXT. ROOF - DAY

Tarik finishes a row of bricks on the wall, which is almost
eye level.

He puts a level on the top row of bricks. It tips to the
right a little bit, but is sound. Tarik looks across Nablus.

OMITTED

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EXT. CLINIC/OFFICE - DAY

Tarik arrives at Moussa's door. Two armed men greet Tarik at
the door with their weapons. They motion for Tarik to enter.

INT. CLINIC/OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Tarik enters to find Miriam at the front desk, hijab covering
her hair.

MIRIAM

What are you doing here?

TARIK

I came to pick you up.

MIRIAM
You're early.

TARIK
We don't know how long it will take
to go across.

Tarik can see into the back office where Moussa works the phone and Aides come and go to hand him things.

Miriam collects her things. She stands at the door and waves goodbye to Moussa and the group. Moussa looks at Tarik.

Tarik holds the look as the SOUND of the office SWELLS UP and Moussa is sucked back in to the chaos of his office, breaking the eye contact.

INT/EXT. CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

ANGLE on Omar as he rolls down the window at the insistence of an ISRAELI SOLDIER. Tarik, Miriam, Isaaq, Hamzi, Muhummad and Waleed look on nervously.

ISRAELI SOLDIER
(In Arabic)
Where you going?

OMAR
Tel Aviv.

The soldier takes the papers and disappears into the booth. It is quiet except for the sound of car and truck engines.

OMITTED

INT. CAR - LATER

The family sits motionless in the car with Waleed hanging his head outside the window.

Omar wipes his forehead of sweat.

Tarik watches the booth door.

A Soldier finally appears and, with their guns, wave cars and trucks to move out of the way.

A Soldier POINTS to Omar and motions him forward. Omar starts up the car.

TARIK'S POV: Men and women look into their car as they pass.

Tarik shares a look with Miriam and he shrinks in his seat.

OMITTED

INT. TRAINING ROOM - NIGHT

Tarik drops his bags as Miriam and Isaaq sit at two small chairs in the small room.

Omar enters removes his jacket and puts on a trainer's robe. He opens his medical kit and he and Waleed begin removing items and placing them on a padded, doctor's bed.

OMAR
(to Tarik)
Start getting changed and then have
a seat on the table.

Tarik begins unbuttoning his shirt.

OMAR (CONT'D)
(to Miriam/Isaaq)
We'll see you after the fight.

Miriam and Isaaq take their orders and stand to leave.

Miriam opens the door and looks back at Tarik whose head is down, serious.

She closes the door.

INT. TRAINING ROOM - LATER

Omar wraps Tarik's hands in tape, delicate and precise.

OMAR
He's just another man and another
fighter. Nothing you can't handle.

Omar finishes the taping on each hand. He inspects them closely.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Let's get you moving.

Tarik stands up and starts moving his arms around. Waleed hands Omar a pair of small pads for Tarik to punch.

Omar holds up the pads.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Combinations. Let's go, 1-2-3.

Tarik throws a quick combination and Omar immediately throws a quick, roundhouse right, showing his former speed and surprising Tarik with an awkward thud to the head.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Wake up.

TARIK
I'm awake.

OMAR
Get angry. Lose control.

Tarik is quiet.

OMAR (CONT'D)
That guy's punches are going to come at your nose and there is no head gear.

The room, lit by a bare bulb, feels like it is heating up. The sound of the crowd is heard above.

OMAR (CONT'D)
1-2-3

Tarik snaps off a quick combination -

BAM-BAM-BAM. Omar's roundhouse right comes and Tarik ducks.

INT. AMPHITHEATER - LATER

Omar leads Waleed and Tarik out. Tarik wears no robe, just a plain, black, over-sized t-shirt with the sleeves cut off.

Tarik looks up at the ring to see the announcer and referee waiting for them.

Tarik looks around at faces yelling at him, cheering him.

INT. RING - MOMENTS LATER

Waleed holds the ropes for Tarik to enter the ring, with Omar following him in. Omar leans close to Tarik's ear to talk over the crowd.

OMAR
Keep moving around.

Tarik bounces around, arms dangling, as he looks at the crowd, searching to find Miriam and Isaaq, sitting ringside.

Jacob heads towards the ring with EMAN and two assistants.

Jacob enters the ring through the ropes. The crowd reacts with applause.

OMAR
(Leaning in to Tarik)
Think how it would sound in the
West Bank!

The referee calls both fighter's to the center of the ring.

IN THE CENTER...

Jacob and Tarik make eye contact and hold it.

REFEREE
Let's have a clean fight. Shake
hands.

They PAT their gloves together.

IN TARIK'S CORNER...

Omar removes Tarik's shirt and inserts his mouthpiece and steps out.

The BELL RINGS. Jacob comes out. Tarik comes out of his corner.

Jacob throws a fast jab to Tarik's face. Followed by another. And another. Tarik moves laterally to escape.

Jacob JABS. Tarik DUCKS and throws a right cross that lands. Jacob backs up, stung, and comes forward swinging.

Tarik puts his hands up in defense. Jacob throws heavy punches up top and then at Tarik's open stomach. Tarik finally wraps Jacob up in a hug.

The referee pulls them apart-

THE BELL RINGS.

TARIK'S CORNER.

Omar douses Tarik's reddened face with water and grease as Tarik regains his breath.

OMAR
Wind sprints, remember?

Tarik nods. THE BELL RINGS.

CENTER OF THE RING

Tarik jabs with his left. Jacob blocks Tarik's jabs, waiting.

Tarik pushes Jacob against the ropes with short combinations. Jacob jabs out of the corner and moves laterally.

Tarik's misses a couple and throws a quick right, keeping Jacob in front of him.

THE BELL RINGS.

TARIK'S CORNER.

Waleed pours water over Tarik's head to cool him off. Omar places a cold compress over Tarik's cheeks to keep the swelling down.

OMAR
You getting impatient? Watch out -
he'll get impatient.

THE BELL RINGS.

CENTER OF THE RING.

Jacob charges at Tarik with a barrage of punches. The CROWD cheers. Tarik swerves out of the way, into the ropes as Jacob pounds away.

The punches land on Tarik's forearms and gloves. Tarik punches off the ropes with his jab. The crowd quiets.

THE BELL RINGS.

TARIK'S CORNER.

Tarik sits down confused, spits his mouthpiece out to Waleed.

TARIK
That was quick.

Omar places the cold compress on his face again.

OMAR
They get longer, so just hang in there.

Tarik gulps a little bit of water. Tarik looks over at Jacob in his corner. Jacob looks at Tarik and smiles. Omar notices and barks-

OMAR
Tarik! I want you to wipe the smile off that whore's face.

Waleed places the mouthpiece back in. Tarik stands and looks at the makeshift scoreboard above the stands to the left of his corner - 4th round.

THE BELL RINGS. THE CENTER OF THE RING.

Tarik and Jacob meet in the middle of the ring, trade jabs and circle each other.

Tarik throws a jab. Jacob counters.

Jacob MOVES RIGHT and then LEFT before throwing a right upper-cut to Tarik's head. Tarik is stunned.

AGAINST THE ROPES.

Jacob moves in and throws a couple of body shots as Tarik tries to wrap him up.

THE BELL RINGS. The referee pulls the fighter's apart.

TARIK'S CORNER.

Omar grabs the side of Tarik's face to look at him.

OMAR
He got you good, huh?

TARIK
Nah.

OMAR
Know what round it is?

TARIK
(thinking)
Going into the fifth.

OMAR
Good. Now adjust. Wait for the
moment and then switch it up on
him.

Waleed wets Tarik's mouthpiece, leans in -

WALEED
Switch it up on him!

BELL RINGS.

Jacob comes out of his corner with a left JAB to Tarik's head, hands coming up in defense, follows with a LEFT to Tarik's stomach. Tarik crumples against the ropes as the flurried combination continues.

Tarik wraps up Jacob's tireless arms. The referee tries to separate the two.

REFEREE
Break it up!

The referee knocks Tarik's arms free to split them up. Tarik takes a step to his right.

ANGLE ON FEET as Tarik adjusts his feet into SOUTHPAW.

Jacob comes barreling forward as Tarik's RIGHT hand leads with a JAB snapping Jacob's head back. The CROWD goes QUIET as Tarik focuses them out.

ON TARIK'S FEET as he plants his left foot.

Tarik cocks his LEFT, crosses to Jacob's right cheek - CRACK. Jacob stumbles/dances back and covers up. Tarik rushes in with a combination upper-cut, crossing to his head.

The CROWD comes alive in a swell, a panic, sensing a knock out.

Jacob crouches and upper cuts Tarik, rocking him back. A ROAR from the crowd.

ON OMAR, as he watches Tarik stumble back.

ON MIRIAM, wincing.

TARIK grabs at Jacob to lock his arms. THE BELL RINGS.

TARIK'S CORNER.

Omar douses Tarik's face with a sponge, cold water streaming down Tarik's swollen face.

OMAR
Wake up!

TARIK
(head down, out of breath)
I'm tired.

OMAR
How many rounds is this fight?

TARIK
Ten.

OMAR
How many rounds do you want to go?
(crouching down)
I'm asking you - how long do you
want the fight to go on?
(quietly)
Look at me man.

Tarik looks up at Omar.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Do you want to win the fight?

TARIK
I want to win.

OMAR

Then get mad. Lose control, Tarik.
Hurt him.

Tarik stands and Omar takes his gloves and rubs them against his old sweater to dry them. Omar slides out of the ring leaving Tarik alone.

Tarik watches Jacob stand.

THE BELL RINGS.

Jacob comes forward. Tarik comes forward.

IN THE CENTER.

Tarik and Jacob walk around each other, gloves up. Jacob pops his jab a couple of times. Tarik ducks and weaves. Jacob stays in front of Tarik.

Tarik punches back. Jacob comes close -

GRABS hold and begins to hang onto Tarik, throwing inside upper-cuts on Tarik. Tarik struggles to free his arms, throws a punch but nothing lands. Both fighters are locked.

Tarik looks out to his corner and sees only darkness and then BAM a punch to his forehead.

Tarik is off-balance. Jacob throws a left hook. Tarik watches, ducks, locks Jacob's arms.

Tarik PUSHES off to get distance from Jacob.

Tarik watches Jacob and all goes QUIET in the field house - the stands go DARK.

Jacob lumbers towards Tarik. Tarik throws a direct right to the - THUD. Jacob is off-balance.

Tarik swings a WILD RIGHT - LANDS on Jacob's head, and then rushes in -

Jacob pivots LEFT and throws a LEFT CROSS-

ANGLE outside the ring as Tarik FALLS to the canvas.

The Ref comes barreling in to push Jacob from standing over Tarik.

Omar watches Tarik through the ropes.

REFeree (O.S.)
Eight. Nine. Ten.

The ref signals the end.

Tarik is able to rise to one knee. He looks at his family -
Isaaq close to Miriam standing and watching.

Omar and Waleed come into the ring and put a towel on Tarik's
shoulders and stand him up.

Jacob goes to Tarik and gives him the fighter's hug.

JACOB
Good fight.

Tarik climbs under the ropes and out of the ring as Jacob
raises his arms and the crowd cheers.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TRAINING ROOM - LATER

Omar standing over Tarik holding an ice bag over his left
eye. Waleed sits nearby in silence.

Miriam enters with Isaaq.

OMAR
It was a good fight.

TARIK
It was shit. I made a fool of
myself.

OMAR
You had him on the ropes.

TARIK
It was shit.

Omar motions for Waleed to leave and they exit the training
room.

MIRIAM
Are you hurt?

TARIK
Everything hurts.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MERCEDES - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Omar drives. Tarik sits in the passenger seat, eyes partly open. In the backseat, Waleed, Isaaq, and Miriam sleep.

OMAR
You're a talented guy. Just like
any loss, you get back up. You
fight again.

TARIK
What do you know about losing?

Omar keeps his eyes diligently on the road, headlights from oncoming traffic throw light on his tired face.

OMAR
I've lost plenty in my life, but I
don't dwell on it, Tarik. You move
forward. Life is a shitty enough
place to think about loss. You
could be a winner.

TARIK
Maybe you only know losing. You
pushed me to be angry and lose
control, but maybe we should have
worked on staying in control.

Omar looks at Tarik and then back at the road.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Tarik falls heavily to bed. She watches over him for a moment. Tarik takes her hand and brings her into bed with him. She comes close and kisses him. Together they fall asleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

OMITTED

OMITTED

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

The small lamp in the corner of the room goes out. ALL IS DARK. The SOUND of a helicopter through the ceiling. A spotlight is all that lights through the windows, occasionally illuminating their faces.

TARIK (CONT'D)
What's going on?

MIRIAM
Must be an incursion.

The sound of a POP! A flare lights the neighborhood outside the windows of the home. The sound of soldiers and yelling, voices over loudspeaker...

LOUDSPEAKER VOICE
(in Arabic)
We are investigating the area! For
your own safety, stay in your
homes!

Tarik and Miriam listen.

A BANG on the DOOR! Tarik and Miriam flinch.

TARIK
Stay here.

MIRIAM
My god.

Miriam goes to Isaaq and sits in bed with him.

INT. ABU-KHDEIR FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Tarik approaches the door. A voice erupts on the other side.

ISRAELI SOLDIER
Open the door!

TARIK
(In Hebrew)
I will open the door!

Tarik opens it to SOLDIERS, who push Tarik to the floor of the home. Tarik feels the guns on him.

ISRAELI SOLDIER
(In Hebrew)
Where are the stairs to the roof?

TARIK
(In Hebrew)
Straight back to your left.

ISRAELI SOLDIER
(In Hebrew)
Go to a safe room.

Tarik nods and they pick him up and lead him back to the bedroom. Tarik opens the door and the Soldier pushes him in, closing the door behind him.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tarik goes to Miriam who crouches in the corner of the room with Isaaq. Isaaq is afraid and quiet. Tarik crouches with them as they sit and listen to-

FEET POUNDING up their stairs. An endless sound of boots and muffled voices.

IN THE NEAR DISTANCE, the sound of tanks, helicopters, gunshots.

Tarik grabs Isaaq and Miriam tightly.

EXT. NABLUS FROM THE ROOF - NIGHT

A FLARE erupts into the night sky. The SOUND of the Helicopter.

A MISSILE is shot towards a street and a group of homes. It EXPLODES in an orange flash, followed by smoke.

GUN FIRE in loud bursts erupt after the explosion.

INT. ABU-KHDEIR HOME, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tarik, Miriam, and Isaaq hold hands over ears to shield the harsh sound of automatic gunfire right above their heads. Isaaq SCREAMS in Miriam's arms.

Tarik grabs Isaaq, holds him close and presses his hands over the boy's ears.

Paint chips and dust drop onto them. The gunfire is endless.

CUT TO:

INT. ABU-KHDEIR HOME, BEDROOM - MORNING

Isaaq is asleep in Miriam's arms. The sound of VOICES on the streets outside.

TARIK

Stay here.

Tarik exits.

INT. ABU-KHDEIR FAMILY KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Tarik surveys the damage around the kitchen. Muhummad joins him.

TARIK

You okay?

MUHUMMAD

Fine.

TARIK

It's not that bad.

Muhummad shakes his head. Tarik walks into the next room.

INT. ABU-KHDEIR HOME, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tarik looks at a blown out window. Old Moses cleans off an old picture frame. Tarik looks up to the ceiling.

EXT. ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Tarik steps onto the roof and finds pieces of brick at his feet. He looks over the edge to see hundreds of bricks in a pile on the ground.

Muhummad joins Tarik and both look over the edge.

Tarik picks up a brick and surveys the brittle concrete masonry, dried and caked, which crumbles in his hands.

Tarik looks to the opposite wall to find written on the wall in clumsy, childlike Arabic -

"We are sorry we did this to your home. This is our job."

AUTOMATIC RIFLES can be heard in the city's center.

Tarik exits the roof, leaving Muhummad.

INT. ABU-KHDEIR FAMILY KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Tarik quickly walks through the family kitchen where Miriam and Aishe clean up.

MIRIAM

What happened? Where are you going?

Tarik storms out of the house, brick in hand, slamming the door behind him.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Tarik begins running full speed toward the sound of GUN FIRE. He runs out of the neighborhood.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - MINUTES LATER

Tarik runs past a bulldozed home as the GUN FIRE gets louder.

CUT TO:

EXT. URBAN STREET - MINUTES LATER

Tarik is running faster. CLOSE on his face...

CUT TO:

OMITTED

EXT. CITY CENTER - MINUTES LATER

Tarik rounds a corner to find young men with Kheffias are grabbing rocks from large piles, rounding the corner, and throwing them. SHOTS are fired with each rock.

Tarik rounds the corner and looks up the street where smoke hovers and only a few soldiers and the sound of trucks and tanks can be heard.

Tarik hurls the rock. There is no sound of it landing.

A TANK CANON BANGS! The RINGING BEGINS. Tarik grabs his ear.

A MAN GRABS Tarik and gets him back into the alley.

Tarik walks away holding his ear.

EXT. REC. CENTER GYM - MOMENTS LATER

The front wall of the gym is collapsed. Tarik can see straight across where the front door of the gym was to the field in the rear of the gym. The field has been further demolished -filled with debris and all the trash.

Omar stands holding Waleed, unconscious, lifeless.

OMAR

They didn't know we were in here.

Tarik takes Waleed from Omar's struggling arms and they walk off.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

They walk down an empty street. POPS of rifle fire can be heard in the distance.

EXT. NABLUS CLINIC - LATER

The clinic is in total pandemonium. Tarik searches for someone, anyone to help, finally grabbing a nurse by the arm.

TARIK

Where is Moussa?

NURSE

Who?

TARIK

Doctor Sift? Where is he?

She shakes her head. A YOUNG DOCTOR approaches and lifts Waleed from Tarik's arms and puts his body on a bloody gurney.

TARIK'S POV: Omar follows as Waleed rolls into the back of the clinic.

CUT TO:

INT. HAMAS BUILDING - LATER

Tarik KNOCKS on the door. It is answered by one of Moussa's guards.

HAMAS BODYGUARD

There is a curfew - do you want to get shot!

Tarik notices the guns trained on him.

HAMAS BODYGUARD

What are you doing here?

TARIK

I am looking for Moussa.

HAMAS BODYGUARD

Why? If you don't have a gun you should just go home.

TARIK

I need medical help.

The men allow Tarik to pass.

INT. MOUSSA'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Moussa leans over a map with several men - all look tired and relentless.

TARIK

There are not enough doctors at the clinic.

MOUSSA

There is a war going on in our neighborhood.

TARIK

There are kids dying in the street. What are you doing about it Moussa?

MOUSSA

Fighting the war. What are you doing Tarik?

Moussa motions for the men to leave, picks up a HAND GUN, and puts it in front of Tarik.

MOUSSA

Out of everyone, I never thought it'd be you that we'd all be thinking is the collaborator.

TARIK

Collaborator?

MOUSSA

I know complex things are hard for you to understand, because you let people punch you, let Israelis punch you.

TARIK

I don't care what you think of me. But I do care if you have the choice to help or hurt people and you choose to hurt them.

MOUSSA

How is that?

TARIK

You never wanted the Rec Center to be rebuilt. It's just politics for you, for Fatah. You use everybody for your own gain.

Moussa slides the gun closer to Tarik.

MOUSSA

Pick it up and go fight. Games are over. This is the real thing.

TARIK
I don't want to.

MOUSSA
Pick it up.

TARIK
No!

Moussa shoves Tarik back against the wall. Tarik takes Moussa by the shirt and pushes him back, puts his fists up.

Moussa pulls out his gun and pistol-whips Tarik on the side of the face. Tarik goes down to his knee.

MOUSSA
I'll kill you if you get in my way.
This is about occupation, not you,
and I'm fighting to the death.
(Pointing the gun)
Open the door.

EXT. HAMAS BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

A BLACK CAR sits and waits for Moussa with dozens of guards all around.

MOUSSA
Get in the car, Tarik.

Moussa grabs Tarik's arm and rushes them both into the car. The car pulls quickly away.

INT. HAMAS CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Moussa puts the gun out for Tarik to take.

MOUSSA
Take the gun.

TARIK
I want out.

MOUSSA
You'll be a martyr if you stay with me.

TARIK
I don't want to be a martyr.

MOUSSA
You'll be a hero.

TARIK
I want to be alive.

MOUSSA
Stop the car.

The car screeches to a halt.

MOUSSA
History will decide who the heroes
and the cowards are. Get out.

Tarik jumps out immediately. Moussa throw a kheffia around his neck, cocks the gun as the car takes off.

OMITTED

INT. ABU-KHDEIR FAMILY KITCHEN - LATER

Miriam, holding Isaaq, Muhummad and Aishe sit silently around the kitchen table. Tea and whatever food they can muster adorns the table.

Across from them, head in hands is Omar.

Hamzi sits off from the kitchen in the living room, smoking. Dania next to him cradling the baby.

A KNOCK on the door. Aishe steps off to answer it.

Tarik enters, Miriam stands with Isaaq and goes to him.

TARIK
I'm okay.

Tarik looks at Omar. Omar looks up at him.

EXT. ROOF - MOMENTS LATER

Tarik switches on the dangling bare bulb, lighting the roof scarcely. Downtown Nablus lays dark and quiet beyond.

OMAR
I'm going to leave.

TARIK

Where?

OMAR

Doesn't matter. There is nothing
left for me here.

Omar looks at Tarik.

TARIK

I am here. We are family now.

OMAR

I don't know. I've lost
everything.

TARIK

We can rebuild. We can fight
again.

They meet eyes. Tarik looks down, grasps onto the cord
hanging onto the bare light bulb, tugs on it and it goes
dark. They both stand in the darkness.

INT. ABU-KHDEIR FAMILY KITCHEN - LATER

Tarik and Omar re-enter the kitchen. Tarik stands behind
Miriam and Isaaq.

He takes his hand and strokes Isaaq's face. Isaaq leans his
head back against the chair and looks up. Tarik looks at
Miriam. She studies him.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Tarik sits on the bed with his head down. Miriam enters.

MIRIAM

I wanted to tell you that you
fought beautifully.

Tarik shields his face with his hands.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

You are a winner to us.

Miriam grabs his hands and forces him to look at her through
his swollen eyes.

They hold on to each other.

CUT TO:

EXT. REC. CENTER FIELD

Tarik, Hamzi, and a few other men carry Waleed's coffin on their shoulders. Omar walks alongside.

EXT. NABLUS STREETS - CONTINUOUS

A group of Hamas men carrying Moussa's coffin.

EXT. NABLUS CITY WALL - DAY

A picture of Waleed is plastered onto a wall. Next to it, a photo of Moussa. Below their names is written "MARTYR". The wall stretches on with photos old and new...

EXT. REC. CENTER

Tarik lifts a wood beam from the pile of split wood. He lays it on a pile in the field.

TARIK

Isaaq. Grab the other end.

Isaaq lifts one end of a long beam. Tarik the other end. They lay it on the pile.

Hamzi wipes some sweat off his face.

HAMZI

Take a break?

TARIK

No. Let's keep going.

HAMZI

Come on, take a break.

TARIK

I just want to finish is all.

They both look around.

HAMZI

Almost there.

TARIK

Almost there.

Isaaq lifts some wood with Muhummad. Tarik and Hamzi saw off the splintered ends of other pieces of wood. They lay brick in neat rows. The day is nearly over.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Tarik running the city streets.

Tarik running the roads outside of town.

Tarik running.

BLACK.

THE END.