Jerusalem, Israel. October 1, 1990.

Ten dark uniforms moved quickly through the street that led to the al-Aqsa Mosque. In some way they were no longer men. The civilians who watched them knew this. Two minutes, maybe three passed as the soldiers crossed through the silent crowds. Had this taken any longer, the merchants would have closed their shops, and the people out walking in the streets would have disappeared too.

A small boy was pulled along by his mother. He had passed the age when she could lift him. Instead she pulled him along the street by his outstretched arm. The boy wanted to stay and watch the soldiers.

She knew this was natural, and that scared her more. She had begun to despise men. She was not conscious of this, but it was a part of her. Late at night, when her husband would caress her with his open hand, she would close her eyes and see blood.

When the soldiers had disappeared from sight, she pulled her son closer to her. His face and chest pushed against her black skirt. The people around them began to talk again. At first they spoke in quiet voices. Gradually the sound became louder. One voice stood out above the rest. The boy could not be certain, but he thought he heard a man say, “They’re going to the temple.”

Before the presidential palace, hundreds of Soviet made T-54 tanks glinted in the dry light of the afternoon sun. Soldiers rode atop them with broad smiles.

An American diplomat watched them from the window of his room. He didn’t need an interpreter to understand the faces of the men he watched. With a capped pen he tapped the glass. One of the distant faces turned toward him and smiled. Hesitantly, the diplomat stopped and dropped the pen onto his desk. The window shook as a plane flew overhead.

The pen fell onto a memo. It read:

*Flight 282 to the States leaves at one*

He turned his back to the window and finished packing. His suitcase lay open on the bed.

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Mike looked at his best friend. “Do you really want to do this?” he asked.

John shook the spray can and smiled. “Sure, why not?”

“Well, I don’t know. It’s just . . .”

“Come on, let’s go.”

The boys slipped around the back corner of the garage into the alley. Standing there in the open they could be seen by anyone who looked in their direction. But there was something in the thought of exposure that excited them.

John held the can in his right hand. Red paint rolled from his grip in a mist that was warm and wet like his breath. Letters appeared on the garage door. Sections of the writing ran, but the message they left was still readable.

*FUCK YOU JEW BAGEL.*

John stood admiring it. In the dimness of the alley, it
looked prophetic. Mike liked the idea less and less since John first told him about it. That was on Monday. Mike had imagined this differently. Now it was very different.

"We’re going to get caught. I’m leaving."

"O.K. We’re done."

When they returned to the long shadows beside the garage, John said, “I can’t wait ‘till that old man sees this. He’ll know we’re not afraid of him.”

In the darkness, his words seemed to gain authority. Mike listened to them. “He’ll know we’re not afraid of him.” This was something the rabbi needed to know. Besides, nothing had happened. Neither one of them had been caught. It was easy.

Mike began to feel better. They raced back along the wooded area behind the rabbi’s house. It ended near the subdivision where they lived. Mike noticed John still carried the spray can. He held it casually as if he had forgotten it was with him.

It was even darker in the woods than it had been along the side of the old man’s garage. Mike’s feet faithfully followed the path they were on, and abruptly he said, “Let’s go by the temple.”

It wasn’t far away. John smiled, “Alright.” Mike led the way. The two boys continued on. Dry clustered leaves and thin patches of moonlight sealed the moving shapes of the boys together from high overhead.

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Eugene Markovitz stepped off the plane. He found it hard to believe he had been on the opposite side of the world less than twenty hours ago. His work required it of him, but for the first time in his life he felt his age. He felt sixty-five. Every year of it, he thought. His body knew it was time for retirement and waited patiently for his mind to learn it too.

His wife sat waiting for him inside the terminal. Around her head she wore a blue scarf. In her lap was the October issue of TIME. She wasn’t reading it. He saw her first, and with a smile, he walked to her.

They embraced quickly.
"Which way to the car?"
"Bernard Shaw is out front. I didn't want to drive."
He expected this.
"How is everyone?"
"Cathy called."
"About the killings?"
"Yes," he said. "Twenty Arabs."

Eugene looked down and cleared his throat. He thought of the corpses he had seen at the entrance to the temple. It had only been a month before.

"Twenty men. One young girl was injured by a stray shrapnel. I visited her in the hospital. She is a very beautiful child. She asked me to pray for the men that were killed. I learned a lesson from her—from her talking like that."

"Cathy was in the streets when the soldiers came. She and Samuel saw them. I fear for her. She has changed over there; it's being around all the killing."

His wife asked him to tell her more, but Eugene didn't want to talk more about it. Not yet. On the car ride back to Clifton, the conversation kept coming back to their daughter, but the rabbi would only say, "She has been around too many bad deaths."

Bernard Shaw was a quiet man. All the while that the rabbi talked with his wife, he remained silent. He deeply loved this family. He worried that the rabbi was doing too much. Bernard had never known the rabbi to look so tired. He had driven with the rabbi's wife to get him from the airport for the last eleven years, and today was the first day he noticed any change. That was why he avoided driving down the road before the temple. It was also the reason he parked the rabbi's car in the drive instead of the garage. They slowed to a stop in front of the white house that had been bought by the temple. It looked large and empty now that Kirk and Cathy were grown.

"The back of the garage was vandalized last night, so was the front of the temple." There. She had said it.

The rabbi said nothing. He turned to look at his wife. Bernard watched him like a child. He smiled at both of them and said softly, "We must do a better job of showing love to our community."