

ABBI

by

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For My Brother

FADE IN:

1 INT. HOSPITAL - TIME SUSPENDED

1

A MAN sits staring straight INTO CAMERA, expressionless.

THE CAMERA IS SO TIGHT that we don't see what he is wearing.

A WOMAN

Also straight INTO CAMERA, matching the earlier shot; also expressionless, except for HER EYES.

WIDER ANGLE

As WE DISCOVER that we are in a HOSPITAL ROOM.

THE MAN is sitting in a chair, across the room from

THE WOMAN, who is in a hospital bed, connected to an intravenous DRIP.

SILENCE, except for the BLEEP BLEEP of THE MONITOR.

A LITTLE WIDER ON THE WOMAN, and in the dimly lit room, we can see that, although

HER EYES

Are very alert and active--

HER BODY

FACE

HANDS

ETC.

Are frozen, unmovable.

We realize that

THE WOMAN is "locked in," completely alert and conscious, but unable to move a muscle in her body.

THE MAN sits there, unmoving, silent.

A TEAR streams down his cheek.

2 EXT. STREET - NIGHT (PERHAPS DUSK) 2

We are gliding along the grey ground.

BEHIND A PAIR OF BLACK SHOES

As they stride forward.

CAMERA moves up to reveal we are behind THE MAN from the hospital.

He is wearing a black suit over a white shirt.

NOTE: THE MAN ALWAYS MOVES RIGHT TO LEFT, AND HIS EYELINE IS ALWAYS TO CAMERA LEFT (LOOKING RIGHT TO LEFT); THIS WILL CHANGE IN SCENE TWENTY ONE.

3 EXT. A CITY - NIGHT 3

Somewhere in the world, sometime in the late 20th Century.

THE WIND HOWLS. THE STREET LIGHTS BLEED.

Ramping to SLOW MOTION, following the MAN IN BLACK--

--Passing FACES look up at THE MAN (who we still follow) --

A THANKFUL FACE-

AN ANGRY FACE--

A SAD FACE--

all the emotions and ethnicities of the world.

Money is handed to certain few -- the homeless, the needy -- accepted with thanks and respect -- in fact, if there is one thing in common to all the faces we pass and eyes we look into, it is RESPECT shown to:

THE MAN in black we have been following, as he strides along the boardwalk.

CAMERA continues in SLOW MOTION.

And for the second time we see:

THE MAN'S FACE

Lean, hard, a loner. Good-looking, perhaps handsome; his smile disarms while eyes penetrate.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But around his somewhat shy, meek, disarming smile, behind his penetrating eyes, one can sense the mounting stress of doubt, sorrow and loneliness.

THE MAN moves through street life, noticing all.

He wears a black suit, white shirt, black tie, and black shoes.

Now we look closer at THE MAN and see...darkness.

Something ominous-

Violent-

Ready to explode...

Suddenly:

SHOTS RING OUT.

A GANG WAR.

SCREAMS.

THE MAN, however, doesn't move. He stops walking and calmly studies the chaos swirling around him--

A HATEFUL BOY/MAN (#1) on top of ANOTHER HATEFUL BOY MAN (#2), beating him in the face with his fists.

THREE HATEFUL BOY/MEN (#3, #4, #5) shooting GUNS (.45s?) at one another, at close range.

TWO HATEFUL BOY/MEN (#6, #7) kick and beat a HATEFUL BOY/MAN (#8), on the ground.

The Man turns and finds himself face-to-face with

A HATEFUL BOY/MAN (#9), VERY CLEAN CUT, all American -- nothing unusual about him; he could be the kid next door -- pointing a .38 at The Man.

The Man moves toward The Hateful Boy/Man until the tip of the .38 barrel actually touches The Man between his eyes.

ON THE BOY/MAN #9's KNUCKLES IS A TATOO MADE UP OF FOUR LETTERS:

H-A-T-E

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

THE MAN

Excuse me, *how do you find...The United Nations?*

The Hateful Boy/Man sees the mark of Cain in The Man's tear-filled eyes and on his sweat-moistened forehead.

HATEFUL BOY/MAN

'the fuck're you talkin' about?

THE MAN

Rain falls on the flowers *and* the weeds.

The Hateful Boy/Man is frightened by this guy's intensity -- he senses what we see: this is one dangerous motherfucker.

HATEFUL BOY/MAN

Crazy fuckin' Jew.

The Hateful Boy/Man turns and runs, disappearing into the night.

HOLD on THE SILHOUETTE of THE MAN.

4 EXT. SYNAGAGUE - NIGHT: 4

The Synagogue stands between two impersonal, ugly office buildings.

Graffiti defaces its front. The word "HATE" is painted in WHITE over the double doors.

5 INT. SYNAGOGUE - NIGHT: 5

The Synagogue is really a large, old theatre with make-shift aisles, pews, and elevated stage.

On stage The Torah, like everything else, is simple.

THE CONGREGATION, NINE PEOPLE, are standing, their expressionless faces turned toward The Torah.

They are holding PRAYER BOOKS.

WHITE MOONLIGHT streams in from two giant windows on one side of the room.

THE ETERNAL LIGHT GLOWS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE RABBI is bowed in front of the open Ark, draped on a TALLEs, HIS BACK TOWARD CAMERA.

RABBI

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the
Lord is One.

THE CONGREGATION

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the
Lord is One.

THE RABBI rises and turns to the congregation -- we recognize that:

It is HIM. It is THE MAN from the street. It is the crazy fuckin' jew from the street.

From now on we will know him only as RABBI.

Eyes feverish, forehead gleams with sweat.

The Congregation remains standing.

RABBI

Blessed be the Name of His glorious
kingdom for ever and ever. And you shall
love the Lord your God with all your
heart and with all your soul and with all
your might.

A HOWLING GUST OF WIND blows open the front doors.

The Rabbi falls silent, raises his head, as if waiting for the Messiah, or God, or someone to enter.

As the wind bangs the doors repeatedly against the inside walls, we get glimpses of the word HATE, painted red on the outside of the doors.

MICHAEL, the temple caretaker, ex gang banger, twenties, African-American, secures the front doors.

MICHAEL WALKS WITH A LIMP AND USES A CANE to aid himself.

RABBI (cont'd)

Thanks, Michael.
(to the congregation)
You can sit down.

The wooden pews bang and rumble as the Congregation sits down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Amongst them we notice:

BEN and KAREN COHEN, a young couple (late teens, early twenties), very SAD looking; and:

ZANE BERG, VERY young, a teenager, pretty in a deep way that is not immediate. What Zane feels now as she looks up at Rabbi -- it's complicated -- obsession, adoration, desperation, love and hate and everything in between.

THE RABBI steps up to the front of the stage. In English:

RABBI (CONT'D) (cont'd)

On my way here today, I experienced a miracle.

(then)

I watched the sun set.

(then)

Perhaps you may have heard the sunset called a miracle, or, perhaps it's the first time you've heard the sunset called a miracle, but in the context of prayer, it is a miracle. Prayer. What is prayer? Prayer is the constant search for the means of repair: repair of the world, and, maybe more important, repair of the self.

Zane looks up at The Rabbi -- he meets her gaze, very briefly, then continues.

RABBI (cont'd)

In true prayer, God is both He to whom we pray and He who prays through us. An old hassidic saying goes: man is the source of his own problems. And a really excellent Rabbi -- who happened to be my father -- once said that the human being must rely upon him or herself; no other human being can really help us. A person is his...or her, own creator and innovator. Redeemer. Messiah. I am trying, right now, every moment of every day, to redeem myself from the darkness of my exile -- I am endlessly, endlessly...searching for the light of my own personal redemption.

The Rabbi swallows -- feels his sore throat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

RABBI (cont'd)

And to pray is to notice that light is
all around us, to take notice of the
wonder all around us, to notice not
weird, unusual stuff, but ordinary stuff,
like the sunset. Listen to me: Hidden
miracles are everywhere.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

RABBI (cont'd)
To see God in the natural and ordinary,
to see God in the *the smallest*
application of goodness and compassion...

The Rabbi now seems to be looking directly at Zane.

RABBI (cont'd)
To see God in the eyes of an intelligent,
vibrant, beautiful young woman...

It's more like he is looking *through* her than at her.

RABBI (cont'd)
...or man... Now *that is a miracle.*
(then)
Okay, the Mourner's Kaddish. You know
what to do.

Zane rises, along with Karen and Ben.

RABBI (cont'd)
May His great Name grow exalted and
sanctified--

RABBI AND CONGREGATION
--Amen--

RABBI
--in the world that He created as He
willed. May He give reign to His
kingship in your lifetimes and in your
days, and in the lifetimes of the entire
Family of Humanity, swiftly and soon.

RABBI AND CONGREGATION
Amen. May His great Name be blessed
forever and ever. Blessed, praised,
glorified, exalted, extolled, mightily
upraised, and lauded be the Name of the
Holy One, Blessed is He--

CONGREGATION
--Blessed is He--

RABBI
--Blessed is He beyond any blessing and
song, praise and consolation that are
uttered in the world.

RABBI AND CONGREGATION
Amen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

RABBI

May there be abundant peace from Heaven,
and life upon us and upon all the people
of the world.

RABBI AND CONGREGATION

Amen.

RABBI

He who makes peace in His heights, may He
make peace upon us and upon all Humanity.

RABBI AND CONGREGATION

Amen.

A few moments of stillness follow this Amen.

Zane slowly sinks into her seat.

Ben and Karen remain standing, uncomfortably.

The service is over.

6 INT. RABBI'S OFFICE - NIGHT:

6

Dimly illuminated by a table and standing LAMPS.

CAMERA moves across the room: we see various photos; The
Rabbi's WIFE (an older photo of the woman we saw in the
hospital), The Rabbi in military uniform, etc.

There are HUNDREDS OF BOOKS in giant shelves.

The Rabbi sits at a simple, large wooden desk.

Behind the desk, mounted in a PLEXIGLASS CASE which hangs on
the wall--

IS A TALLE. Later on, when we examine it more closely, we
will see that this Talles has a BULLET HOLE, around which
there are RED BLOOD STAINS...

Michael sits across from Rabbi, empties the collection onto
the desk and counts the money, writing down the amount in a
cashbook (or an Apple notebook computer).

Rabbi runs his hand over a small, beaten black case.

MICHAEL

(re: the case)

That came for you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Michael looks at him.

RABBI
Thanks, Michael.

MICHAEL
Rabbi, you okay? You don't look too good. You need anything?

RABBI
Yes. I need the address.

MICHAEL
(slowly)
The address...

Michael reluctantly reaches into his pocket--

MICHAEL (cont'd)
Okay...

He takes out a crumpled piece of paper and hands it to Rabbi.

MICHAEL (CONT'D) (cont'd)
...here.

RABBI
How.

MICHAEL
Sources.
(then, trying something)
When you got me off the street, Rabbi, you saved, I think you really did, you saved my life.

The Rabbi looks at him.

MICHAEL (cont'd)
You saved my life, Rabbi. I would've ended up like my daddy, or my brothers, I know I would've. But you...you were the only one that cared.

Slowly:

RABBI
(he already knows)
What are you saying, Michael?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MICHAEL

I remember what you told me when I first came to work here: violence is not the way. Now it's my turn to tell you, Rabbi: violence is not the way.

(then)

Please...do not do this.

RABBI

Michael, have I ever said...have I ever told you that I love you?

MICHAEL

Rabbi...

(quietly)

...no.

RABBI

I do love you, Michael. I do.

(then)

C'mere...

The Rabbi stands up. Michael goes to him. The Rabbi embraces Michael warmly, lovingly, as if Michael were his son.

RABBI (cont'd)

I feel about you as if you were my own son -- I love you as a son, Michael...as my own son.

MICHAEL

You love everyone. Too much, I think, maybe...I dunno.

They break.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

(indicating the case)

What...what's inside?

RABBI

Michael, you never lie to me.

(then, re: case)

You know **what's inside**.

MICHAEL

Yes. I do. I looked. And I don't like what I saw.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

RABBI
I'm sorry, Michael.

Rabbi takes an OLDER LOOKING PISTOL (a LUGER?) from a desk drawer. Michael sees the gun. NOTE: we, the audience, do NOT see the gun. ***

RABBI (cont'd)
Belonged to my father.

MICHAEL
I know that, too.
(then)
I am begging you not to go forward with this plan.

RABBI
I *think* I have to. ***

MICHAEL
Why?

Rabbi looks at him.

RABBI
Because *it may be the first real thing* I've done in my entire life. ***

MICHAEL
That's not true and you know it. You do *real things* all the time. You help people every day. You save people. Look at me. Look at Eddie Munoz. Without you...without you, I don't even wanna think about what would've happened to him. People love you, Rabbi. You *inspire* them.

RABBI
But do I make a difference in the world? ***

MICHAEL
Yes, you *do*, you *do* make a difference. Little differences are just as important as big ones, right?
(off Rabbi's look, pleading)
Right?

Michael watches as Rabbi opens the briefcase and places the pistol inside it (we don't see the inside of the case).

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Rabbi closes the case and looks at Michael.

RABBI

Michael...do you believe that Jews are the "chosen people?"

MICHAEL

You're changing the subject, Rabbi.

RABBI

This *is* the subject, Michael. Do you believe Jews are "the chosen people?"

MICHAEL

Rabbi...

RABBI

The Chosen People? Yes or no. Right or wrong.

Michael doesn't say anything.

RABBI (cont'd)

Michael, I'm asking, and I need an answer from you. *Has God chosen The Jews before every one else in the world? Am I chosen by God over you?*

MICHAEL

No.

RABBI

Thank you, Michael. Thank you.

Michael is slightly at a loss. He becomes uncomfortable, can't think what to say, smiles apologetically.

MICHAEL

I don't know what that has do with the address I got from my connection, or that case sitting there.

(off Rabbi' look)

You're not feeling good...

RABBI

The flu or something.

MICHAEL

Well, it's the weather. I don't like it. Don't like it one bit. *Earthquake weather.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Michael breaks down and buries his head in the Rabbi's shoulder.

MICHAEL (cont'd)
This place is my home. I got nowhere else to go, Rabbi. I got nowhere else to go...

The Rabbi holds Michael in his arms with great emotion.

RABBI
Calm down, Michael. Please, don't fret. I don't want you to worry. Nothing's going to happen to the Synagogue. I promise.

Michael calms.

MICHAEL
I'm sorry, Rabbi.
(then)
I love you, too.
(attempting a smile)
Hey Rabbi, does the river make the banks ...or do the banks make the river?

RABBI
Good question.

7 INT. SYNAGOGUE - NIGHT:

7

THE ETERNAL LIGHT glows.

Rabbi sits in the front row, lost in thought.

Now, he looks up at the THE LIGHT.

RABBI'S POV:

The LIGHT is OUT OF FOCUS -- breathing. So is the Ark.

What is going on with him? Is this focus problem physical, psychological, chemical? Is he having a schizophrenic episode? If it isn't organic -- is he simply losing his mind?

RABBI

Speaks to The Light which glows above the Ark:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RABBI
You break my heart...

Feeling himself observed, he turns around.

RABBI (cont'd)
Oh, hi.

ZANE BERG

Young, hyper-intelligent yet deeply spiritual, with a dark, intense beauty that grows. She stands at the far end of the synagogue, by the entrance doors, holding a white paper bag.

ZANE
I brought Coffee.

WIDER TO INCLUDE BOTH:

RABBI
Thanks. I'm trying to cut down on the
caffeine.
(off her look)
I've been a little edgy...lately.

They stare at one another with nothing more to say. The entire space of the giant room between them.

8 An awkward silence. Then:

8

RABBI (cont'd)
Zane--

ZANE
--Don't worry. I'll be outta here in a
few minutes.

She puts the coffee on the floor, unbuttons her coat, fumbles in her pocket, takes out a handkerchief and blows her nose.

Zane (cont'd)
It's really weird outside. Windy and
desolate. *Apocalyptic.*

RABBI
When the Romans burned Jerusalem in 70
A.D. The Jews thought it was the
apocalypse...it wasn't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Zane looks at him, Zane moves forward and reaches one hand out to him -- he takes her hand in his, their fingers interlock. ***

They hold like this, staring into one another's eyes.

She brings her other hand to his face, runs her fingers down his cheek, and tenderly draws him to herself.

Zane
Kiss me.

She offers a compassionate, gentle kiss. Rabbi doesn't respond.

Zane (cont'd)
What's wrong?

RABBI
Nothing.

ZANE
You're a liar, holy guy. You used to love kissing me.

RABBI
No, I mean "nothing."
(then)
Zane...we were a mistake. An accident.
I'm sorry anything ever happened...
(then)
And speaking of lying...you lied to me about your age. Why did you do that, Zane?

ZANE
Well I feel like I'm fifty. ***

RABBI
Look, Zane, I care about you, you know that. I want to be your friend. But please, nothing more. ***

ZANE
Something's wrong. ***

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

RABBI

I told you, *nothing* is what's wrong...
 (how do I explain this)
 I was sitting in there, and I was
 thinking that...
 What if...
 What if where I thought there was
 something, there *wasn't*.

ZANE

Nothing.

RABBI

Yes. Nothing.

She looks at him and this is what she is thinking:
 "Rabbi...we are *not* nothing."

He looks at her.

She leans her head against his shoulder.

But The Rabbi is distracted.

Zane looks at him and sees that he is ill.

She puts her hand on his temple, he lets her be -- her hand
 is cool, anyway.

RABBI (*cont'd*)

Why do you keep coming to service? You
 don't believe in God. Why do you come
 here?

ZANE

Because I love looking at you. Because I
 love listening to you. Because I love
 you, Rabbi.

RABBI

Zane, you don't love *me*. You love the
idea of me. I promise, I am nothing like
 the idea.

Zane stares at him.

ZANE

Have you watched it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

RABBI

No. I'm sorry. I thought...

ZANE

...What..?

RABBI

That it was something...I don't know what I thought. It's right in the tape machine **in my office.**

ZANE

Doesn't matter. Whenever you feel like it. I made it for you. And don't worry - it's not X-rated.

RABBI

Really. Too bad.

ZANE

Fuck it, you can't talk to me, I can't talk to you -- I mean, we have a hard time talking. Right?

RABBI

All you do is talk.

ZANE

You have problems, man. You are totally repressed about...about every fucking thing.

(off his look)

You need someone to talk to, you know you do, and that someone is me, like it or not.

He looks at her. Yes, he must admit, she's right.

RABBI

You're right. I do have problems. I have more problems, I am **probably** more...fucked up...than you could ever understand.

Zane

Stop saying that. Stop assuming what I can and can't understand.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Zane (cont'd)
That tape says all the things I can't say
to you. Which, obviously, you are afraid
of hearing.

RABBI

Obviously, I am.

Zane looks around his office, at all the hundreds and
hundreds of books arranged neatly on the shelves.

ZANE

All these books and you still don't get
it...

She moves closer to him.

ZANE (cont'd)

You don't need to be *well* to make others
well. You don't need to be *healed* to
heal the world.

Another awkward silence as they stare at one another. Then:

ZANE (cont'd)

Well...I should go. I have an
appointment.

(then, off his look)

What? Don't look at me that way. Don't
judge.

RABBI

Never would I *judge* you. Goodbye,
Zane...be careful.

She kisses him.

ZANE

I love you.

RABBI

Please.

ZANE

I just want you to love--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

RABBI

--Zane--

ZANE

--You need me.

RABBI

Zane...

ZANE

She's dead, Rabbi. She's--

RABBI

She is not dead.

(then, softening)

Zane, listen to me. I care about you.
Very much. I do. I want you to be
happy. I want you to be safe...but I...

(then)

...I'm sorry, I can't get into this.

ZANE

I know I know I know. You don't love me,
I don't believe in God. If everything is
nothing it doesn't matter anyway.

Rabbi stares into space; again, THE FOCUS is gone.

ZANE (cont'd)

Why don't you say something?

RABBI

Because you never stop talking. Over and
over. The same thing. I'm sick of it.

He looks at her.

ZANE

I have to go.

She puts on her coat.

She goes toward the door, then turns and walks back to him.

RABBI

Don't say anything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

ZANE

You don't get it, do you? I can see that now...you never will.

(off his look)

Maybe God is real. And maybe not. Won't know until we're dead. But right now we're alive. Alive. And there's one thing I do know: we had something, Rabbi, even though you won't admit it, we had something beautiful, something Godlike, to use your own words. We did. But now it's gone. Dead.

She bends down and kisses him on the mouth, deep. She is desperately sad. He does not respond. Stone. ***

ZANE (cont'd) ***

How can you do what you do without love? ***

RABBI

You'll catch the flu.

Zane looks at him a long while, then leaves. ***

He hears the doors slam, echoing through the lonely building.

Rabbi collapses into a pew, exhausted for this exchange. ***

CONTINUED: (8)

10 INT. OFFICE - NIGHT: 10

Rabbi comes in and paces back and forth. He looks at the video player and the tape sitting on it.

He moves to the television, turns it on, and pushes the tape into the player.

ON THE TELEVISION

A shot of Zane fades up. She is looking right into the CAMERA:

ZANE

So you finally decided to watch it.
Thanks, Rabbi. I made it for you. This
is your life. This is The Truth.

RABBI

turns off the television before we see or hear any more.

He ejects the tape.

He walks over to the desk and sits. He stares down at

A PHOTO OF THE RABBI'S WIFE

Once beautiful.

RABBI

puts his fingers to the photo, touching it.

RABBI

Nothing...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suddenly, Rabbi picks the frame up and hurls it against the wall, smashing it to pieces.

Rabbi moves to the PLEXI CASE WHICH CONTAINS HIS FATHER'S BULLET-HOLE TALLEES. ***

As he stares into the case: ***

WE SEE THE RABBI'S REFLECTION IN THE CASE, and over his reflection DISSOLVE IN the following IMAGES: ***

INT. FATHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT: *

Young Rabbi moves down a darkened hallway. *

INT. YOUNG RABBI'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT: *

The LITTLE BOY, young Rabbi, is studying on the living room floor. Numerous books are opened before him. *

Now the door opens. *

Young Rabbi's father staggers in, BADLY BEATEN (swollen eye and bloody nose, or possibly a STAB WOUND) and looking terrible, trying to walk, a wreck. *

He stumbles and falls to the floor. *

Young Rabbi runs to his fallen father. *

INT. FATHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT: *

Young Rabbi moves down a darkened hallway. *

11 EXT. FIELD AND HORIZON - SUNSET 11

Back to the Rabbi's childhood.

THE SILHOUETTE OF A LITTLE BOY stands on the horizon.

At the other end of the horizon, THE SILHOUETTE OF A MAN WEARING A SKULLCAP dressed in the apparel of a Hasidic Jew.

His arms are stretched out in the direction of young Rabbi, the little boy.

Now, his words, on this softly sunlit remembered day, come floating on the wind--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE RABBI'S FATHER (V.O.)

(in a whisper)

Look at the sky. The trees. The moon and
sun. Miracles are all around us.

The boy runs across the horizon to his father, and is swept
up in his father's arms.

They embrace one another.

INT. FATHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT:

*

Young Rabbi moves down a darkened hallway.

*

He arrives at a door and pushes it open, peering through the
crack.

*

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

14 INT. FATHER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

14

Inside the room, Rabbi's father is speaking with TWO OMINOUS
LOOKING MEN.

They are surrounded by:

BOXES OF GUNS -- many, many guns.

The MEN turn slowly and stare down at young Rabbi.

Young Rabbi looks at the men and sees that they have
CONCENTRATION CAMP TATOOS on the back of their hands.

His Father walks forward, touches him gently on the cheek,
and softly closes the door, shutting young Rabbi out of the
room.

INT. FATHER'S OFFICE - DAY:

YOUNG RABBI and HIS FATHER study the Torah together.

INT. FATHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT:

Young Rabbi moves down a darkened hallway.

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Young Rabbi moves down a darkened hallway.

He arrives at a door and pushes it open, peering through the crack.

18 INT. FATHER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

18

In the room, there's just a desk visible, nothing else, no one.

We recognize this room as Young Rabbi' father's office.

Then, slowly, horribly, a blood puddle becomes visible behind the desk, dark red and oozing outward.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Young Rabbi cries out, runs forward, stops and now we see sprawled behind the desk young Rabbi' father, the Rabbi who carried the Torah, the laughing man who stood on he horizon and hugged his son.

The blood puddle comes from his head and near his right hand there is a PISTOL -- the same one, THE LUGER.

Young Rabbi, in shock, takes his fathers BLOOD STAINED TALLEES (the same one) and HUGS IT CLOSE TO HIS BODY.

He begins to cry as CAMERA MOVES INTO THE TALLEES we go:

BACK TO:

19 INT. OFFICE - NIGHT:

19

On A GUN in a drawer. CAMERA moves past PHOTO of Rabbi's father and up to Rabbi.

*
*

CAMERA pulls back to wide as Rabbi thinks about all this. He gets up and exits.

*
*

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

20 INT. OFFICE - LATER

20

Rabbi sits at his desk, lost in thought, wearing his fathers Talles.

KAREN COHEN (O.S.)
We need your help.

Rabbi looks up--

BEN AND KAREN COHEN

Are silhouetted in the doorway.

RABBI
Okay. Please, sit down.

They step into the light.

BEN COHEN is young, baby-faced, innocent looking. Two frightened eyes stare painfully out of his face.

KAREN COHEN is also young, but seems stronger; yet her look, too, is anxious.

They sit down across the desk from Rabbi.

The Rabbi looks at his two visitors.

Ben's glance is averted, as if to spare the Rabbi from the horror and terror Ben feels in his heart.

Karen leans forward, but can't find any words.

RABBI (cont'd)
So, how you guys doin'?

KAREN
Not...not so good, I think.

RABBI
I'm sorry to hear that...
(with great tenderness)
...can I help?

KAREN
I'm not really sure you can. But, well, maybe...anyway, we're here, so... It was Ben, really, he doesn't... So I thought... This morning I thought we'd come to temple. And here we are.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN
I'm losing it, Rabbi.

KAREN
Ben is...well, he hasn't really gotten
over what happened.

Karen turns to her husband. He does not let her see how
frightened he is, looks down at the table.

KAREN (cont'd)
Can you speak to Ben, Rabbi?

RABBI
Yes.

Rabbi looks at Ben.

RABBI (cont'd)
(cautiously)
Tell me what you're feeling right now,
Ben. Please, talk to me. I'm here for
you.

Ben doesn't respond.

KAREN
It all began last... when... well, you
know what happened last year, I don't
have to go into it.

Karen looks at her husband. He sits just as before, silent,
head down.

RABBI
Have the police done anything?

KAREN
It's hard to say. Our...situation...
doesn't seem to be a very high priority
for them...with all the other...stuff...
going on in the world...

BEN
To answer your question, Rabbi, no, the
police haven't done anything.

The Rabbi is trying, seriously making an attempt to
sympathize and understand. But it is hard for him...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KAREN

Ben feels responsible.

Rabbi nods again, encouragingly.

KAREN (cont'd)

I don't blame anyone for what happened.
It's the way the world is. I've been
reading about *hate*...on the internet.

Ben Cohen stops rubbing his cheek with his finger. He lays
his hands on the table.

KAREN (cont'd)

They're not afraid, Rabbi, they're not
afraid to die. They've nothing to lose.
They have no fear. Hate has some kind
of...*power*. Hate...they *embrace* their
hate, no they love their hate more than
their own children. How...how can this
be?

(looks at Ben, then back to
Rabbi)

I don't let myself worry too much about
things like that. Just the way I am. But
Ben thinks about it all the time. He
turns what happened over and over again
in his mind. We talk about it, talk
about it again, and talk about it some
more. Over and over. And Ben thinks
that, well, he says that--

BEN

There is no God, Rabbi. I really believe
that now. I have come to the conclusion
that there is just...nothing.

(then)

Nothing.

RABBI

(amazed at the coincidence)

Nothing...

BEN

Yes...nothing.

Rabbi is lost in thought.

KAREN

Rabbi, is something wrong?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

He snaps out of it.

RABBI

I'm sorry, go on.

KAREN

Well...Ben doesn't mean what he said,
Rabbi, he's not feeling...he's not well.

Karen falls silent, looking to The Rabbi, her help and support, her lifeline, for an answer.

KAREN (cont'd)

Rabbi...how can one...how can a person
keep having...I mean *continue to have*
faith, in this, *in a world like this*.

Karen is entrusting The Rabbi with her husband's life, waiting for some brilliant philosophical advice which will instantly dissolve this omnipresent threat of hate and violence in the world, and disentangle her fucked up existence.

And here it is:

RABBI

When my wife became ill, I felt the **exact**
same way.

Rabbi looks at Ben's pathetic face.

RABBI (CONT'D) (cont'd)

But then I realized something: the world
pursues its natural course. **And it is**
very difficult to see this when we feel
we are in hell.

They look at him, a hopeful moment; perhaps a great and positive insight is finally coming to them...

RABBI (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Suppose I steal a flower seed and plant
it in the ground. To us, **expecting**
justice, it would be just and right that
the flower doesn't grow. But... *it does*
grow.

The Rabbi takes a dramatic pause; then:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

RABBI(cont'd):
 And then something terrible happens, some
violence forces itself into our secure,
 safe world. It's overwhelming. *We feel*
God will not save us and God begins to
 slip away from us. *And I am not speaking*
some hocus pocus religious context. I
 have been there personally.

This is helping...a little.

Whether it is helpful or not, we can see that *the Rabbi has*
genuine empathy for this tragic young couple.

BEN

It *is* overwhelming. When something like
 this happens, it's hard to have faith in
 anything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

RABBI

Now *that* is the question, you said it before, Karen: *can we continue to have faith when we live in a world like this?*

Now they are really listening to him.

RABBI (cont'd)

Moses. Moses was supposedly a very wise man. Forty-nine of the fifty doors of understanding were opened to Moses. Seeing that the fiftieth door was closed to him, Moses substituted *faith*.

(then)

My old man, God rest his soul, used to say that "true wisdom is the ability to act when it is necessary on the basis of incomplete information..."

The Rabbi drifts off for a moment, thinking about his father... Then--

RABBI (cont'd)

Have *faith* in God.

KAREN

(dubiously)

I have faith...despite what happened...to me...to us...despite what happened...I still have faith in God. I wish Ben could.

RABBI

Faith does NOT exist in certainty! Faith exists in the domain of doubt!

Ben says nothing. Rabbi looks at Ben, then Karen, then Ben.

RABBI (cont'd)

My dad...we lived in Corpus Cristi, Texas. There are Jews in Corpus Cristi, it's the one place in Texas with a few crazy jews. But, despite that...when I was a kid, I felt like I was so alone. And my dad used to say: "it's good to be alone. If you can learn to be alone, truly happy in your aloneness, you will be happy on this earth." Well, I learned to be alone, but still, it didn't...

They are looking at him -- waiting for a punch line.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

RABBI (cont'd)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

RABBI

Why? What's wrong, Ben?

Ben puts his head down -- Karen has an idea.

KAREN

I'll go home, Ben, and you stay here with the Rabbi. It's better if you're alone together. Just the two of you.

RABBI

I can give you a ride home.

She gets up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (10)

KAREN
C'mon, Ben...stay here and talk to the
Rabbi alone.

BEN
(embarassed)
Sure...okay, whatever.

Rabbi gets up and opens the door for her.

RABBI
Is your car parked outside?

KAREN
The lot in back.

RABBI
I'll take Ben home when we're done.

KAREN
Thank you, Rabbi.

She exits.

The Rabbi turns and look at:

BEN

Who breathes deeply, as if he's been running.

WIDER

The two men stare at one another.

21 INT. THE RABBI'S OFFICE - NIGHT

21

Ben once again sits across the desk from Rabbi. Ben is very uncomfortable -- he'd rather be any place but here. And he can't look Rabbi in the eye.

RABBI
Thanks, Ben. Thanks for staying.

BEN
Sure.

RABBI
Want some coffee or something? You can
smoke in here, if you want.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN
Really? Thanks.

Ben takes out, lights up a cigarette.

RABBI
(making small talk)
I guess you can't be out fishing very
long in this weather.

BEN
Just short trips. Too rough. Too
choppy. Doesn't matter, fish're all gone
anyway. Poisoned. Pollution.

RABBI
Got much to do ashore?

BEN
I work at the dock.

RABBI
Right.

End of conversation.

Ben stares at the table and again Rabbi feels his
ineffectuality sweeping over him; Rabbi feels his emotional
paralysis and can't shake it -- he's in a cold sweat.

RABBI (cont'd)
Money problems?

Ben shakes his head.

RABBI (cont'd)
Sorry for asking. Money does have a lot
to do with everything.

BEN
Obviously. As we know.

Rabbi clasps his hands so that the knuckles gleam. A pain
throbs behind his eyes and his mouth is dry.

The sick feeling comes in waves, through Rabbi's head and
stomach.

RABBI
How long have you been...suicidal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BEN(cont 'd)

RABBI

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

RABBI (cont'd)
Listen...I need you to help me, Ben. I
need you to help me help you. Do you
hear me, Ben? Ben, look at me.

(then)

I don't think you understand what I'm
trying to--

BEN

(lashing out)

--You don't understand, Rabbi. I did
fucking nothing.

A long PAUSE; Rabbi is taken aback by this outburst.

He turns OFF the MUSIC.

Ben slowly gets up and begins to move around the room.

BEN (CONT'D) (cont'd)

(somewhat calmly)

They beat her and raped her and and beat
her and raped her and I stood there not
fighting back not moving frozen with fear
and she was screaming and I stood there,
they raped, I did nothing, walked right
into the showers, we always say, "why
didn't they fight back, better to die
fighting..." And now me, the same thing,
fear and weakness... I'm so ashamed I
can't look at Karen, I can't look her in
the eye, do you know how that feels? And
Rabbi, I tell you this and it hurts to do
it but I'm going to as long as I'm saying
everything else, that, since the, after
what happened, I became...impotent. I'm
impotent, Rabbi, *impotent*. Do you know
how that feels, do you understand, Rabbi,
I'm impotent.

(falling apart)

I'm impotent...

Rabbi gathers his thoughts for a few moments, then,
carefully:

RABBI

...Maybe...maybe you should see a doctor.
Or a psychiatrist...

BEN

Can't afford it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

RABBI

Ben, there are programs...community services...

(then)

What does your wife--

BEN

--Karen's fine. She's just fine.

RABBI

I see.

BEN

You don't see.

RABBI

Please, Ben. Listen to me. We're all responsible. All of us. Me, especially.

BEN

You? That's the first thing you've said that I agree with. You are responsible. You're responsible for saying stupid, meaningless things. "The world pursues its natural course."

(off Rabbi' look)

You say *the world pursues its natural course*. That's bullshit, man. That's an excuse, that's all that is. You're trying to rationalize an unfair, fucked world. So what if "the world pursues its natural course?" What does that have to do with me? With my wife? *With my dead baby?*

Rabbi thinks about this for a moment.

RABBI

Maybe you're right, Ben, maybe I am trying to rationalize.

(then, a different approach)

Okay...okay. Let me tell you a story, Ben. It won't take long...

(then)

During world war two, a woman, non-jewish I think, maybe Catholic, hid nine or ten jews in her house, ranging from age three to age sixty three, in a house where a pail was the toilet.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

RABBI (cont'd)
 When an older woman got sick and knew she was dying, she said: "my dead body is gonna get you caught. What are you gonna do with my body?" She was really concerned, obsessed with the fact that, in dying, she may cause the other to get caught...

()

Then she died. At night, secretly and in stages, they dismembered and buried her body outside under the mud.

(then)

When I hear stories like this, about *human beings*...well, sometimes, I am more afraid of living than of dying. I know this better than anyone, Ben. You know I do, *you know it*.

They fall silent.

BEN

(sarcastic)

That's a really cool story, Rabbi...

(then)

Anyway, I'm sorry, Karen and I were very sad about...about your wife...

RABBI

I loved her, Ben, more than I love God. My life was over, I'm not frightened of death, there wasn't a single reason for me to go on living. But I did.

Ben listens.

RABBI (cont'd)

I found a reason. Other human beings.

Ben nods slowly.

RABBI (cont'd)

I've discovered something. He who has a *why* to live can bear almost any *how*. You, Ben, are one of my whys.

RABBI (cont'd)

Gee, thanks.

RABBI (cont'd)

Sarcasm is good. It shows you still have fight. It shows you still have the power to transform.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

BEN

You're wrong, Rabbi. You are good. You are the only good man I've ever known. I'm sorry that...you can't help me. It's not your fault.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

RABBI

Ben, let my try, let me try to help you: there is no meaning in the rapes and murders and hate and catastrophic events and violent incidents and "Acts Of God", no, there is *nothing* in those things, but *there is meaning* in the way we live our individual lives and through the exercise of our God-given intelligence, God-given courage, and God-given hope and faith. Yes, *hope and faith*. And especially hope and faith.

Ben is becoming more and more anxious.

RABBI (cont'd)

Listen to me: I am *not* an optimist. I am a hopist. I am a faithist.

BEN

I have no idea what you're talking about, Rabbi. I've always been a good person. I believed in doing good and still do. All my life, do unto others, that is, do good everywhere you can and it'll come back to you. I look for good in people, and try to do my part to ease suffering in the world. Yes, if you want to call it that, I'm an optimist. I don't understand what's wrong with that, looking for good in people and in the world, I just don't understand.

RABBI

Well, optimism assumes that, in life, goodness will conquer all, which, as we now know, doesn't always *look that way*. *And that is why we feel the way we do. Goodness doesn't look like it won in your situation. But the world takes horror and chews it and eats it gulps it and shits it out. And faith grows. That's right. From shit. Hope and faith are born of life's tragic dimension. Hey grow in the domain of doubt and...incidence, Ben. Hope and faith, Ben, hope and faith.*

There is a long silence, then:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (10)

BEN
I should go. I'm gonna walk home.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (11)

RABBI

No. Please. Try and understand why I'm telling you all this. I probably have no idea what I'm talking about, in fact, I'm sure I have no idea what I'm talking about, I'm just trying to help you and I don't know any other way other than talking about things I really am unsure of myself.

(then)

Does that make any sense?

Ben has no answer.

RABBI (cont'd)

What I'm trying to say is: I'm the one who needs help, don't you see that? You're the healthy one and I'm the sick one! I'm sitting here, like an idiot, pretending to try and convince you that God and hope and faith and compassion and other people are reasons to keep living when I don't even necessarily believe that myself. What a pathetic bastard I am. Do you see what a pathetic human being I am, what an empty wretch sits here before you, *begging* you to stay with him, to keep him company in this emptiness, to make him feel...useful? I'm not a Rabbi. I'm a nothing who needs your help. Help me, Ben, help me help you. Help me help both of us.

This strategy is not working.

BEN

I appreciate all you've done here, your thoughts and stories and philosophy, Rabbi, and for giving me so much of your valuable time, *and for trying so hard to convince me that you are worse off than me.*

(then)

I have to go to work now. I'm sorry, I have to leave you.

Ben stands up.

RABBI

One more thing...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (12)

Ben looks at him.

RABBI (cont'd)

My father...my father was the strongest, the most powerful, the most spritually pure man I have ever known. I miss him so much. I needed him, Ben, I needed him when I was growing up. I need him now.

The EMOTION in Rabbi's voice is capturing Ben, who slowly sits down.

RABBI (cont'd)

Karen needs you, Ben. The child that you are going to make together, the child that you are going to bring into this world needs you. I need you. I want to see that beautiful face of yours around here for a long, long time.

Ben is beginning to soften...

BEN

Your father was a Rabbi, too, right?

RABBI

Yes, he was a great, great Rabbi. Except for one thing.

(this is really important)

My father...my dad **could not make sense of the world either. He became convinced** that the only way to ease the great suffering in this world was through action, not just action, *violent* action. He felt so guilty about my mother not being around, he loved me so much, he was ashamed that I saw him with guns, and he was ashamed of his violent nature, and I know he didn't want me to be like him, -- this is my theory, anyway -- so, in an attempt to teach me...**that vengeance is only God's...he...**

(this is very hard for him)

...he took himself away from me. He took himself away.

The Rabbi has to stop.

Ben has been blown away by the story. He is now totally with the Rabbi.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (13)

RABBI (cont'd)

(slowly)

Ben...what the world *needs*, what the world *desperately* needs right now is more *light*, not less. Empathetic souls are the light, Ben, they are the light. When my father left this world, there was that much less goodness on earth. The world needs every pure soul to keep living, to stay part of the light, every soul like yours, Ben.

(this is it)

Because, it is only through the combined *power* of all these light-filled souls of goodness that we can *transform* the world.

(finally)

Please, Ben...*stay*.

Rabbi has won -- he has turned Ben.

BEN

Rabbi...

RABBI

Yes..?

BEN

Thank you. It's weird, but...I understand, now. I think...I mean...I actually feel...better. Thank you so much...

Rabbi goes to Ben and embraces him, holds him tightly.

BEN (cont'd)

Thank you so much...

Now, Rabbi takes a piece of paper, pencil, writes.

RABBI

My cell number, my home number and my number here. Call any time of the day or night. Please, Ben. Call.

Rabbi hands Ben the piece of paper.

BEN

Thanks, Rabbi. Thanks for everything. I really appreciate it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (14)

RABBI
Just think about our conversation. We'll
talk again tomorrow, okay?

BEN
Okay. Bye now.

RABBI
Goodbye.

Ben exits.

Rabbi sinks into his chair and closes his eyes.

RABBI (cont'd)
Please God, help him.

22 INT. SYNAGOGUE - NIGHT:

22

Rabbi comes in and looks around.

He walks to the front doors, opens them and looks out.

Now he comes back down the aisle toward the stage.

He gets to the foot of the stage and stands there, facing the
Torah.

Again, THE ETERNAL SEEMS OUT OF FOCUS.

RABBI
*I feel that I was useful with Ben.
But...you make things so...hard. I
need...help. I need help. Help me,
please. Help me, please...with...*

A dull silence fills the massive emptiness of the synagogue.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rabbi gets down on his knees.

RABBI (cont'd)

I'll do anything...just tell me what to do...make me useful. *Useful*. I don't know what to do anymore. I just...don't...know. I need you to show me. Guide me. Lead me...help me. Tell me what to do...tell me what to do. I *feel* like I was useful...but I need you to show me...the suffering is...just...too much...the *suffering*.

He gets to his feet, stands motionless, listening. Sweat pours down his face.

RABBI (cont'd)

I see. *Nothing*.

That moment he senses someone. Rabbi turns to face:

WIDE ANGLE

Zane is standing at the far end of the synagogue, a silhouette in the moonlight streaming in through the large windows.

Exhausted, Rabbi sits down in one of the pews. A long pause.

RABBI (cont'd)

You shouldn't be here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ZANE

No, I should, I mean, yes I should. Or whatever.

RABBI

Whatever...

ZANE

Go home and get in bed. You need rest.

RABBI

Why are you here, Zane?

Slowly:

ZANE

I got home...and I knew I had to come back.

(then)

Rabbi, I feel bad about what I said. *I didn't mean it. Any of it.* You're the most *amazing* person I've ever known...

(then)

Don't you understand, you're all I have.

She goes to him, kneels at his feet, putting her arms around his legs.

ZANE (cont'd)

You're all I have...

Rabbi gently lifts Zane's chin up to face him.

RABBI

That's not true, Zane. You know that isn't true. You have yourself. You are the most important person in *your* life. You survived, Zane, you survived hell. You can do anything. You have great strength. *I know you do. I believe in you.*

ZANE

I love you, Rabbi.

RABBI

And I love you.

They embrace.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

RABBI (cont'd)
Karen and Ben Cohen were here.

ZANE
I saw them. At service this afternoon.
She was crying.

RABBI
I talked to them. I have no idea what I
was talking about...but, maybe. Maybe it
meant something to Ben. I have to *hope*
that it did. I just...I have no idea
what to do.

ZANE
What can anybody do? I can't imagine --
to be raped, beaten, lose your baby.
Unbelievably horrible. I can't begin to
understand how she feels.
(then)
Why don't they do something about that
gang?

He looks at her blankly.

RABBI
(but he knows)
Who..?

ZANE
Hate. The gang. Hate. That's what they
call themselves...*Hate*.

RABBI
(again, he knows exactly who
they are)
Hate...

RABBI (cont'd)
I don't know, Zane. I just don't know.

She presses his head hard against her breast, taking him in
her arms, silencing him.

In the background, THE OFFICE PHONE BEGINS TO RING. Then:

RABBI (cont'd)
Maybe I helped him, Zane. I really hope
I did.

Rabbi gets up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

RABBI (cont'd)
You should go home. ***

Zane doesn't move. ***

ZANE
I wanna stay here with you. ***

RABBI
We can't do that. ***

He helps her up. ***

RABBI (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Zane...please go. ***

Her feelings are hurt by the fact that he doesn't want her to stay with him. ***

ZANE
I want to be with you. You need--

RABBI
JUST GO. *

Silenced. *

She turns and walks out. *

Rabbi looks up and sees Michael, standing outside the office door. ***

MICHAEL
You should send her home. *

RABBI
To her father? He almost killed her.
He's what brought her to me.

MICHAEL
She's in love with you, Rabbi.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

RABBI

She's young, she'll get over it. I'm just trying to keep her away from that man.

MICHAEL

Is that what you're doing?

RABBI

He'll kill her if she goes back to him.

MICHAEL

Runaways get killed in the streets, too.

RABBI

Not her -- she's a survivor.

MICHAEL

Yeah, she *survives*.

RABBI

(sharply)

Michael, that's enough. She's putting herself through school. It's hard. But she's gonna do something great with her life, I know it, I can *feel* it. She's a very special person.

(then)

And special people are better off alone. We all are.

As Rabbi moves back toward his office:

MICHAEL

Police just called...

Rabbi stops and turns back to Michael.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

About Ben. Rabbi...

Michael is trying his best to hide it, he's not sure what to do, how to break the news to Rabbi, but something sad is written all over his face.

RABBI

He's okay, right?

MICHAEL

There was an accident...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

RABBI
An accident..?

MICHAEL
They're not sure what happened...a car. ***

RABBI
But he's okay. ***
(then)
Where is he?

MICHAEL
Main Street Crossroads. Hit and run, ***
they think... ***

RABBI
But he's fine, right? He didn't get ***
hurt, did he? ***

MICHAEL
Had your name in his hand, written on a ***
piece of paper... ***

RABBI
My name...

MICHAEL
(nods)
Cops're there. Some kids found him. ***

RABBI REALIZE THAT BEN IS DEAD. ***

Without any further reply, Rabbi moves toward the doors. ***

NOTE: FROM HERE ON, RABBI NOW MOVES LEFT TO RIGHT, AND
ALWAYS LOOKS CAMERA RIGHT.

MICHAEL (cont'd) *
Rabbi...

RABBI
Lock up and go to bed, Michael.

25 EXT. SYNAGOGUE PARKING LOT - NIGHT: 25

The moon casts Rabbi's long shadow on the garbage-strewn concrete. The WIND HOWLS and blows with great fury.

Rabbi stops walking when he sees:

THE RABBI'S POV - HIS VOLVO

has been vandalized: tires slashed, windows broken, a giant red word -- HATE -- painted over the hood.

BACK TO SCENE

As A MUSCLE CAR pulls up and stops, MUSIC BLASTING. *

Rabbi looks over and sees the car -- in the half-light, glimpse FOUR HATERS inside -- an AK-47 is raised and--

As RABBI drops to the ground--

The AK-47 SHOOTS several rounds into Rabbi' car, further destroying it.

As the muscle car tears off, CAMERA moves from Rabbi, hunkered down behind his car. *

26 EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT: 26

Rabbi walks in the RAIN AND WIND, passing PEOPLE, BUILDINGS, CARS.

Things look distorted -- OUT OF FOCUS.

THE STREET LIGHTS ARE BLEEDING WHITE LIGHT.

27 EXT. DOWNTOWN INTERSECTION - NIGHT: 27

Rabbi walks up. THICK SHEETS OF HALE ARE FALLING.

A police car, LIGHTS running, stands just under a bridge.

TWO COPS hover nearby.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ben is lying face-down, stretched out in some shallow, darkened water.

One hand is outstretched, as if reaching for something.

Rabbi approaches the cops.

COP #1 speaks to Rabbi for a moment, then nods.

Rabbi steps into the water, walks slowly over to Ben's body, and kneels.

Rabbi pulls up Ben's twisted, lifeless body and embraces it.

Tears stream down Rabbi's face.

RABBI

Forgive me, Ben...forgive me.

Still holding Ben in his arms, he SCREAMS up at the heavens--

LIGHTNING strikes throughout the background.

THE WIND SCREAMS.

THE LIGHTS BLEED.

28 EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT: 28

Rabbi walks, carrying his case. The RAIN has stopped.

The HOWLING WIND continues.

Rabbi stops and looks at the PIECE OF PAPER with the address written that Michael gave him.

Rabbi continues walking.

29 EXT. THE HATE HOUSE - NIGHT: 29

The MUSCLE CAR from earlier is parked in the driveway.

30 EXT. STREET - NIGHT: 30

Rabbi stands in the moonlit shadow of a GIANT KNARLED DEAD TREE, staring across the street at THE HATE HOUSE.

Things are in and OUT OF FOCUS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUD MUSIC from inside the house.

RABBI
Please...make me...useful.

Rabbi turns and SUDDENLY:

THE GHOST OF BEN COHEN

Is standing face to face with Rabbi -- Ben has a very subtle,
OTHERWORLDLY GLOW.

RABBI

Stares at the ghost.

RABBI AND THE GHOST

Stand transfixed, staring into one another's eyes for a long
beat, then--

BEN COHEN'S GHOST
Hate.

RABBI turns and looks back at the house.

Ben's Ghost is gone.

The MUSIC becomes SO LOUD inside Rabbi's head, like a white
hot knife piercing his brain...

RABBI
(a whisper)
Stop...

--he brings his hands to his ears and covers them...

RABBI (cont'd)
STOP!!!

31 INT. ZANE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT:

31

BOOKS and papers are strewn everywhere. This is the home of
A STUDENT.

The decor features numerous MANDALAS.

MUSIC PLAYS from a room deeper within.

There is KNOCKING at the front door (on which is painted
another MANDALA).

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A moment later, Zane enters from the back room. She goes to the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ZANE
Who is it?

RABBI (O.S.)
Me.

Zane opens the door. Rabbi is standing there. Without a word, Zane steps aside and lets him in.

He walks over to the couch and looks back at Zane.

RABBI (cont'd)
Tell him to leave.

Zane looks at Rabbi -- he looks terrible.

She exits into the bedroom.

A moment later, Zane comes back into the room, followed by a SAD-LOOKING MAN with sunken eyes, shirt and tie undone, carrying his jacket.

The Sad-Looking Man looks at Rabbi.

RABBI (cont'd)
Get out. If you ever come here again,
I'll kill you.

The freaked-out Sad-Looking Man looks at Zane, then moves to the door.

SAD-LOOKING MAN
(to Zane)
This is fucked.

He exits. Rabbi sits on the couch.

ZANE
What are you doing here?

RABBI
I...I don't know. I thought you stopped
this.

Rabbi notices a MARIJUANA ROACH in a nearby ashtray.

RABBI (cont'd)
I thought you stopped this, too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ZANE

Genesis one twelve: *I have given you all the seed bearing plants and herbs to use...y'know that verse, don't you, Rabbi?*

RABBI

Cute.

ZANE

You should call, y'know?

Rabbi looks at her.

ZANE (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Who the hell are you to come here like this?

(then)

No, I'll tell you: you are selfish, you are inconsiderate, you are...I don't wanna see you right now.

Silence. She looks at him. He looks awful.

RABBI

Ben Cohen is dead.

ZANE

Oh...oh god.

Zane sinks to the couch.

RABBI

He didn't kill himself...

(off her look)

It was an accident. He wanted to live, Zane...he wanted to live.

A beat, then:

Zane

Rabbi...I'm so sorry...

(softening)

Let's go somewhere. Get some coffee or something. You look terrible.

RABBI

No. *I'm* sorry. I should go. I don't know why I came here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ZANE
Please...stay.

Rabbi rises to leave.

ZANE (cont'd)
I know why you came here.
(off his look)
Because you need me. We need each other.
We're all we have...

He rises.

RABBI
I'm sorry.

He walks to the door.

ZANE
What is wrong with you, man?

Rabbi stops and turns slowly toward her.

RABBI
What is wrong with me? You want to know
what is wrong with me? I will tell you
what is wrong with me. I don't want you,
Zane. And the more you say you "need me"
and we "need each other" the more you
offend me. The more I resent you. Do
you hear me? ***

ZANE
Uh-huh. I hear you. I hear you. You
don't mean that -- you have no idea what
you're saying. Your mouth moves, words
come out, but they don't mean anything.
You are such a fucked up guy I can't
believe it.

RABBI
You fucking hypocrite. You say there is
no God but you *are* obsessed with love. ***
You say love is God but you sell it or
give it away like it's worthless. *You* ***
have tricks walking out of here and ***
you're smoking dope and you say you need ***
me, and this is, I don't know what this ***
is. ***

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

ZANE

Then what are you doing here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

RABBI

I don't know.

ZANE

You are a liar and you are a coward.

RABBI

I am going. I have to talk to Ben's
wife. Ben was an accident. He want to
live...I know it.

(then)

Nothing.

*
*

ZANE

(quietly)

What about the love we made..What about
that? Was that *nothing?*

(off him NOT looking at her)

Look at me, Rabbi....look at me.

*
*

Something in her voice makes him do just that.

ZANE (cont'd)

I gave you everything. *Everything.*

RABBI

That was...that was a mistake. I'm going
to talk to ben's wife.

He goes to the door, but before he can open it she grabs him
and spins him around.

ZANE

(an explosion)

LOOK AT ME. Does God exist is a bull
shit question and you know it. The
question is *do you exist and what for?*
Where is God is a bull shit question.
The question is *where are you and are you
verifying God by your actions?* You say
I'm a hypocrite and maybe it's true but I
do believe one thing. When two people
love each other with all their heart and
soul and might, *that* is God. *If you
would know God, love.* Do you hear me?
If you would know God, love. But you
don't and you won't and you wouldn't if
you could and you never will.

Rabbi contemplates this for a moment. Then:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

RABBI

You read too many books, Zane.

ZANE

You can do better than that.

He puts his hands on her and looks into her eyes. Their eyes
lock on one another.

RABBI

It may be too late for me to know God,
Zane...

(then, with great finality)

I can see by the look on your face that
you understand.

And so can we.

Zane takes this in for a moment, then explodes with:

ZANE

No, Rabbi, I don't understand you. I
feel sorry for you. You're pathetic.
You think you're better than me but what
do you do? You kill people. You *kill*
people, Rabbi. You kill people like Ben
with your self pity.

RABBI

Ben was an accident. He wanted to live.
I know it. I know--

ZANE

(cutting him off and down)

--You're not a man. You're nothing.
Nothing. You are nothing but a self
mutilator. You're nothing, nothing to
me. You talk about nothing but YOU ARE
NOTHING.

They stand there, looking at one another for a VERY long
beat, then:

Rabbi turns and leaves.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

32 ND KAREN COHEN'S KITCHEN - NIGHT: 32

Rabbi is standing at the kitchen door, still carrying his weapons case.

31 The FRIDGE is open -- it's light illuminates the room. 31

Karen staggers back, away from the open door and sinks into a kitchen chair.

RABBI

Karen...

Karen grips the kitchen table to steady herself.

Rabbi sits down next to her. He clasps his hands over hers. They sit, silent.

RABBI (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Karen...let's pray together.

KAREN COHEN

No.

Rabbi nods, understanding. She takes her hands out from under his, grasps the kitchen table and pushes herself up.

RABBI

Karen...

KAREN

Leave me alone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RABBI

If there's anything I can do for you... I mean, if--

KAREN

Get out.

Karen leaves the room, exiting into the further room, where she sits on the couch and cries quietly. ***

Rabbi stands there, feeling quite helpless, separate and alone. ***

RABBI

I spoke with him, but...Karen, I helped him, I think...I think he wanted to live.

She isn't even listening. ***

OFF SCREEN A PHONE BEGINS TO RING.

Rabbi stands there for a moment longer, all alone. ***

Now he turns and goes out the back door.

33 EXT. BEN AND KAREN COHEN'S KITCHEN - NIGHT: 33

As Rabbi comes out onto the porch he turns around and looks into the kitchen.

RABBI'S POV - THROUGH THE KITCHEN - KAREN

is sitting on the living room couch, still crying. ***

THE PHONE BEGINS TO RING AGAIN -- she doesn't answer it.

RABBI

Stands there, lost in thought.

OFFSCREEN, A POLICE CAR pulls up -- WE SEE ITS LIGHTS play over him.

Helpless and very much alone, Rabbi moves off into the bleeding night.

34 EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT: 34

Rabbi stands there, thinking. Decides he must go in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RABBI
Okay...*nothing* is everything.

*

35 INT. RABBI' WIFE HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT: 35

We remember this room from the beginning of the film.

Although her brain is alert and HER EYES ARE VERY MUCH ALIVE, Rabbi's wife is "locked in," unable to speak or move her body.

The door quietly opens and Rabbi comes in, slowly approaches the bed.

RABBI
Are you cold?

HER EYES. He pulls a hospital blanket over her body.

RABBI (CONT'D) (cont'd)
I don't really think you'd be very interested in hearing anything about what's going on with me...

Rabbi moves to a nearby chair.

RABBI (cont'd)
My life, most of it, *all* of it, is still pretty meaningless. *Nothing* has changed. Yet *everything is changing*.

He takes the chair and pulls it over to the bed.

RABBI (cont'd)
I have no friends, not because people don't like me, really, but because I don't like people. I try and I try but I just can't... Well, I try to love them, to understand them, to handle them...with care... like... *fragile things*, which, let's face it, is what they are...but... I don't like them.

Rabbi sits down.

RABBI (cont'd)
I know you *know* what I mean.
(then)
I'm trying to imagine your half of this conversation...
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RABBI (cont'd)
I think that, I don't know, if you could talk, we probably wouldn't be talking right now...

He looks at her for a long beat.

RABBI (cont'd)
Let's face it: that's exactly the way it was when you got...sick.
(then)
Sure you're alright? Not too cold? It's cold in here...

Rabbi stands up, collecting his thoughts.

RABBI (CONT'D) (cont'd)
I think, if you could speak with me, I know what you'd say. You'd say that I believe in a *noun* that cannot be known. "God." When I *should* believe in the *concept* of *Godliness*; healing the sick, feeding the hungry, supporting the fallen, pursuing peace, loving my neighbor, and so forth and so on, blah blah blah, etcetera etcetera. *Just so many pearls before so much...crap.* You'd ask, as you did so many times, do I, in living my life, imitate the ways of Godliness. And when I answer "no," you call me a hypocrite.

He sits down, thinking.

RABBI (cont'd)
Then you'd go on and on and on about how Godliness is believed through doing justice, in caring, in curing, in protecting. To behave in Godly fashion, this is the only way to know God. That is, I'm pretty sure, what you would say.

Another pause.

RABBI (cont'd)
You always asked me if I hear the prayers I'm saying. If I really listen to the prayers... Well, I think about this quite a bit. And you know something, you're right. I pray, but...I just pray...*and it only feels like, how difficult it is to commit one's life to an intention, an intention that feels so...impossible.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Rabbi is beginning to lose it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

RABBI (cont'd)

I feel so...ineffectual. The
impossibility of feeling that I am making
a difference is driving me...

(he stops)

Well, I'm sorry. I don't know what else
to say...

(pausing to collect his
thoughts)

Michael thinks that we should...I
should...try...I don't know...try to tell
you how I feel...so that we can...or that
I can...reach some kind of closure in the
situation.

Rabbi is trying to hold it together.

RABBI (cont'd)

Michael *doesn't realize that I did close
with you, long, long ago.* He won't, or
maybe he can't, understand the fact that
you hated ...hate me.

He takes her hand in his and looks into her (pleading) eyes
for a long time.

RABBI (cont'd)

Well...all I can do now is apologize...

(then)

So...I am sorry. I do love you. Always
have.

Slowly, HER EYES CLOSE.

The monitor suddenly FLATLINES, making a LOW BEEPING SOUND.

The Rabbi drops her hand to the bed like a poisonous snake,
stands up knocking his chair over and backs away from the bed
as--

TWO NURSES RUSH IN and

Begin to work on her.

Rabbi watches them for a few moments, then:

36 EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT:

36

Rabbi comes out, dizzy, head reeling.

37 EXT. STREET - NIGHT: 37

Rabbi is wandering down the street, tired, lost in more ways than one.

It is RAINING AGAIN -- the WIND HOWLS -- TRASH FLIES through the air.

Suddenly Rabbi hears OFFSCREEN SCREAMS:

VOICE
Help! Help me! Please! Help me!

Rabbi looks around.

The Voice is coming from a nearby DARKENED GARAGE.

Rabbi moves into:

38 INT. DARK GARAGE - NIGHT: 38

In SILHOUETTE: as Rabbi comes into the dark garage, he is HIT OVER THE HEAD by an UNSEEN ASSAILANT.

Rabbi falls to the ground, dazed.

Pockets are searched, money and credit cards taken.

Legs and feet run away, disappearing into the shadows.

EXT. GARAGE - NIGHT:

Rabbi crawls on all fours, dragging The Black Case through the blood-red mud, out of the garage and into the street.

A CAR passes him by. ANOTHER CAR passes.

Then A CAR STOPS.

The Driver's door opens, legs emerge and move around to where Rabbi is lying.

THE MAN'S VOICE
Hey...you alright?

We still don't see a face.

THE MAN'S VOICE (cont'd)
Here...

The still unseen Man opens the passenger door.

THE MAN'S VOICE (cont'd)
Lemme help you...

He picks Rabbi up and helps him into the car.

THE MAN'S VOICE (cont'd)
C'mon...get in...I'm here for you.

INT. CAR - MOVING - NIGHT:

Rabbi is settled in the passenger seat; the still unseen Man drives.

It is RAINING again. The street lights are all down -- blinking.

THE MAN'S VOICE
Don't know what happened to all the lights. Broke down, I guess.

RABBI
(mumbling)
I'm a long way from light.

THE MAN'S VOICE
Say what?

RABBI
What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE MAN'S VOICE

What what?

RABBI

I'm sorry. I'm very...tired.

THE MAN'S VOICE

Sure, I understand. You okay, nothing broken?

RABBI

I'm fine.

THE MAN'S VOICE

Where you going? Where can I take you? I'll take you wherever you wanna go.

RABBI

Do you mind just driving for a little while?

THE MAN'S VOICE

No problem. I'll drive. You get some rest.

RABBI

Thank you, thank you. I appreciate your kindness.

THE MAN'S VOICE

My brother is a Rabbi.

For the first time, in PASSING HEADLIGHTS, we see THE MAN'S FACE: it is an ordinary face, a very kind, very gentle yet unreadable face. He wears a WHITE T-SHIRT and JEANS -- the uniform of a real "regular guy."

RABBI

How did you...know...

THE MAN

I drove him, once. My brother.

RABBI

I was walking around, wandering, really, thinking about my...I heard a person call out. She needed help. I tried to...someone hit me. I think I was robbed.

(then)

Hate.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

THE MAN

Sit back and relax. We'll have some quiet time.

(then)

Just tell me when you want out.

(off Rabbi)

You've been through a lot.

RABBI

You have no idea.

(then)

Please forgive me...I...this...this is so humiliating. A Rabbi like me...it's so foolish...trying to help others when I can't even help myself.

THE MAN

I saw you on the street back there. Crawling on the sidewalk. On your hands and knees.

RABBI

You saw me..?

THE MAN

Don't be embarrassed. You're tired. You're exhausted. Rest. Go to sleep.

RABBI

This has been a long, hard night for me.

THE MAN

I know.

RABBI

Sometimes...it's too overwhelming.

THE MAN

Yes...the world is spinning out of control.

RABBI

I try to be the still center...but I can't hold on.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. CAR - LATER - NIGHT:

The Man drives as Rabbi dozes.

THE MAN

Lean on me. It's okay. Lean on me.

The Man pulls his car over to the side of the road. The Man
WHISPERS:

THE MAN (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Let me hold you.

The Man takes sleeping Rabbi in his arms, WHISPERS:

THE MAN (cont'd)

I'm your brother. Your *only* brother. I
love you. I've *always* loved you.

The Man is either a sicko, or crazy, or both.

He looks into Rabbi's closed eyes, WHISPERS:

THE MAN (cont'd)

I looked everywhere for you. I wanted
you. I needed you. I knew I could have
you. *I had to have you.*

The Man kisses unconscious Rabbi on the lips, deeply.
WHISPERS:

THE MAN (cont'd)

(wiping his mouth)

I like kissing you. My lips are sweet,
like's gods sugar. Don't worry, it's
nothing. I make love with all my
friends. Men, women, children,
everybody. I'm an equal opportunity
lover. You all make love with me sooner
or later. No one escapes.

Rabbi stirs -- begins to regain consciousness.

Rabbi's eyes open.

RABBI

What are you doing..?

EXT. CAR - NIGHT:

The Man opens his door, gets out of the car and walks around to the passenger side.

He throws the passenger door and pulls the Rabbi out of the car.

NOTE: THEY ARE BACK RIGHT WHERE THEY STARTED, IN FRONT OF THE GIANT BLACK VOID OF A A LOADING DOCK.

THEY HAVE TRAVELED IN A CIRCLE.

THE MAN
C'mon...get the fuck out. Time for you to go. Pathetic animal.

He throws the Rabbi to the ground.

Dazed, The Rabbi looks up at him.

RABBI
Why..?

THE MAN
Faggot.

Slowly, the Rabbi staggers to his feet.

THE BIG BLACK VOID IS BEHIND HIM.

THE MAN (cont'd)
Bitch.

Now, in some PASSING HEADLIGHTS, Rabbi gets a good look at The Man for the first time.

RABBI
I know you...I know what you're trying to do...

The Rabbi turns and begins to walk away.

THE MAN
You fucked her best friend.

This stops the Rabbi in his tracks. He turns back to The Man.

RABBI
It won't work.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE MAN

You did it to her. You locked her into that living hell on earth with the pain and anger you caused her. Like you did with your mother, and your berating, criticizing, impatient disrespect. Your father was a hero, but you're a coward, Rabbi, you don't deserve to wear your father's talles or to worship at his torah! At least HE had the COURAGE to get a gun and DO SOMETHING, you ineffectual piece of shit.

RABBI

IT WON'T WORK!

THE MAN

You killed your wife, Rabbi. You put her in that locked-in hell. You made her sick. You did it to her. You, YOU, YOU!

RABBI

DON'T SAY THAT!

The Man moves closer to the Rabbi -- within striking distance.

THE MAN

You made her sick, you made her suffer--

The Rabbi hits him in the face.

THE MAN (cont'd)

That's right, you caused it! Just like that kid who killed himself tonight--

RABBI

HE DIDN'T KILL HIMSELF--

THE MAN

--Now the wife is gonna blow her brains out and there's nothing you can do about it! And THE GIRL, the girl is back on dope, turning tricks, and it's gonna kill her, too!

THE RABBI HITS HIM AGAIN.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

THE MAN (cont'd)
 (bringing his fists up to
 fight)
 That's it! C'mon! Let's go, fucker!

But the Rabbi still hesitates...

THE MAN (cont'd)
 (really bitchy)
 Do you recognize this:
 (IN A WOMAN'S VOICE)
 Help me! Help me!
 (then)
 YOU ARE A HELPLESS *NOTHING* WHO WILL DIE
 HAVING *DONE* NOTHING AND HAVING *LEFT*
 NOTHING. *UNKNOWN*. A BIG FUCKIN' *ZERO*.

SCREAMING, The Rabbi charges and tackles The Man, lands on top of him and begins punching him in the face in an uncontrollable fit of rage, over and over, then grabs him by the throat and chokes the life out of him.

The Man dies.

The Rabbi, sobbing, drops the dead body to the ground.

RABBI
 What...what have I done..?

The Rabbi gets unsteadily to his feet, backing away from the dead body.

RABBI (cont'd)
 Oh god, what have I done...forgive me.

Suddenly, The Man SEIZES, begins to COUGH.

The Rabbi, realizing The Man is still alive, begins to laugh through his sobs.

The Man gets to his feet, coughing, points at The Rabbi and begins to laugh.

The Rabbi is crying and laughing at the same time.

RABBI (cont'd)
 You're alive! Thank God you're alive!

The Man abruptly stops laughing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

THE MAN
 YOU STUPID MAN, THE STORM OF THE LORD
 WILL BURST OUT IN WRATH, A WHIRLWIND
 SWIRLING DOWN ON THE HEADS OF THE WICKED!
 AND *THAT*, MOTHERFUCKER, IS *THE TRUTH!*

The Man moves to his car, gets in, backs up and tears off
 turning right at Rabbi.

Before he can react, THE CAR HITS RABBI, KILLING HIM IN A
 BLAST OF HI-BEAM WHITE LIGHT.

BLOW OUT.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

43 EXT. HATE HOUSE - NIGHT: 43

Rabbi is lying on the ground, unconscious. He opens his eyes
 and slowly, staggers to his feet. Shaking.

Behind him, WE CAN SEE THE HATE HOUSE.

The STREET LIGHTS ARE BLEEDING.

The Rabbi looks down at his feet to find:

HIS GUN CASE

Sitting on the ground. *How did it get there? We don't know.*

THE RABBI

Picks up the case and

Turns right into:

THE GHOST OF BEN COHEN

Standing face to face with Rabbi.

THE GHOST OF BEN COHEN AND RABBI

Stare into one another -- Ben again has that subtle
 otherworldly glow.

Behind Ben looms THE HATE HOUSE.

HATEFUL MUSIC BLASTS from inside.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GHOST OF BEN COHEN

Hate.

RABBI

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Moves past Ben toward the house.

44 EXT. HATE HOUSE - NIGHT: 44

The EMPTY BLACK CASE drops to the ground.

Rabbi walks past the MUSCLE CAR we saw earlier, which is parked in the driveway.

THE HATEFUL MUSIC GETS LOUDER.

RABBI is being propelled by an inner force, a force which takes him past the boundaries of reason and self-control.

He strides up to the front door, carrying a .44 in each hand.

As he reaches the front door, the Ghost Of Ben Cohen steps into the LIGHT.

GHOST OF BEN COHEN

Hate.

THE CAMERA PANS UP TO THE BLACK SKY--

*

OVER MUSIC, WE SEE A MONTAGE OF EMOTIONAL IMAGES FROM THE ENTIRE STORY -- ALL THE CHARACTERS, ETC. (including the end).

*

*

THEN

*

CAMERA PANS BACK DOWN FROM THE BLACK SKY TO FIND:

*

RABBI, stumbling toward us, HOLDING HIS FATHER'S LUGER.

*

HE HAS BEEN SHOT IN THE SHOULDER (BLOOD on his white shirt)

*

He falls to his knees, dizzy, and as CAMERA PUSHES IN ON HIS FACE,

*

*

WE SEE WHAT HAPPENED INSIDE THE HATE HOUSE PLAYED IN A FAST MOTION LOOP WHICH GETS FASTER AND FASTER, EXPLODING THE NEURONS IN HIS BRAIN UNTIL HE CAN TAKE NO MORE:

*

*

*

45 INT. HATE HOUSE - NIGHT: 45

THERE IS NO SOUND.

*

THE FOLLOWING IS PLAYED AS A SINGLE LOOP WHICH GETS FASTER AND FASTER--

*

*

--THE LOOP PLAYS BOTH FORWARD AND IN REVERSE--

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IN THE HALLWAY OUTSIDE HATE APARTMENT, RABBI OPENS THE CASE
AND TAKES OUT THE GUNS--

RABBI comes in and SCREAMS (we don't hear what):

THE HATEFUL BOY/MAN (#1) comes out into the hallway and

HATEFUL BOY/MAN #2 comes into the living room.

HOLDING TWO SEMI-AUTOMATICS UP AT THE SAME TIME, RABBI BLOWS
#1 BACK THROUGH THE HALL AND #2 THROUGH THE LIVING ROOM
BOXES.

#3 APPEARS BEHIND RABBI IN THE HALLWAY, RABBI SPINS ONE
HUNDRED EIGHTY DEGREES IN FAST MOTION AND SHOOTS HIM.

RABBI MOVES THROUGH THE HOUSE AND INTO THE KITCHEN.

#4 APPEARS IN THE LIVING ROOM. RABBI NAILS HIM WITH A SERIES
OF SHOTS FROM BOTH GUNS.

#5 RUNS DOWN THE HALL AND INTO THE BEDROOM, CLOSING THE DOOR.

RABBI FIRES NINE HOLES INTO THE BEDROOM DOOR, LIGHT BLASTING
THROUGH EACH HOLE, AS RABBI FIRES RIGHT INTO CAMERA, BLOWING
OUT THE IMAGE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RABBI DROPS HIS GUNS TO THE FLOOR AND takes out HIS FATHER'S *
PISTOL (THE LUGER).

48 INT. HATE HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT: 48

HATEFUL BOY/MAN #9 is wounded, cowering behind the toilet.

WE RECOGNIZE HATEFUL BOY/MAN #9 as the one who put a gun to
Rabbi's head at the beginning of the story.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

50 Rabbi approaches #5, and puts the barrel of his father's 50 PISTOL right between #9's eyes, just as #9 had done to him.

As Rabbi stands there, the barrel of his father's pistol against #9's forehead.

WE DO NOT HEAR THE FOLLOWING DIALOGUE:

*

HATEFUL BOY/MAN #9
 Don't kill me! Please! Don't kill me!
 Please, I'm beggin' you, man! Please
 don't kill me!

SMASH CUT TO / FLASHBACK:

51 INT. YOUNG RABBI'S HOUSE - NIGHT: 51

Of Rabbi as a little boy, discovering his father's dead body, the PISTOL lying near the puddle of blood and the BULLET HOLE TALLEES.

RABBI
 Excuse me, but I still need to find The
 United Nations...
 (then)
 I AM NOT YOU!

Rabbi turns and exits the room, leaving #5 alive.

53 EXT. HATE HOUSE - NIGHT: 53

As RABBI, on his knees, screams from the memory.

*

When he looks up:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE GHOST OF BEN COHEN

Is standing over him.

GHOST OF BEN COHEN

Hate.

54 INT. SYNAGOGUE - NIGHT:

54

The front doors open and Rabbi staggers in, OUT OF BLASTING BLEEDING WHITE LIGHT, carrying his father's PISTOL, past the giant graffiti word HATE.

As he wavers up the aisle, with difficulty, he pulls his bloody shirt and jacket off, really, he TEARS them off, SCREAMING with pain as he does so.

His shoulder wound is revealed -- blood oozes from it.

RABBI

You break my heart...

Rabbi stumbles onto the low stage, toward The Ark.

RABBI (cont'd)

Again and again and again and again...

YOU BREAK MY HEART!

In a sudden movement, Rabbi brings up the PISTOL and SHOOTS the Ark three times.

BAM! BAM! BAM!

The SHOTS ECHO in the large space. Wood splinters.

Then all is quiet.

Rabbi stands there, shocked by what he has done. It's as if he is waiting for a reply.

No reply comes.

Rabbi SCREAMS, charges forward and pulls over the Ark -- The Torah comes crashing out onto the floor.

He SCREAMS again as he falls to his knees in front of the fallen Torah, still holding the pistol.

RABBI (cont'd)

I gave you my life...

MY LIFE!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RABBI (cont'd)
 I gave you my life and you break my
 heart... Do something! What am I gonna
 do now? You! Do! Nothing! You do
 nothing! Are you want me to do
 everything! Where were you? WHERE THE
 HELL WERE YOU!

Rabbi is losing it -- tears stream down his face.

He crawls to The fallen Torah and begins to kiss it.

RABBI (CONT'D) (cont'd)

I...I...I'm so sorry...I tried to
 do...good. But I am too...weak. I need
 you to help me. Help me. Forgive
 me...forgive me...please. Please forgive
 me. God. You are all I have. I have
 nothing else. You're all I have. All i
 want...all I need...is...a sign. Show me
 you want me. Shoe me a sign...oh God...a
 sign...please.

Rabbi tries to stand up--

RABBI (cont'd)

You're all I have.
 I have nothing else.
 Just you...
 You're all I have...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He gets to his feet, putting his fathers PISTOL to his head--

RABBI (cont'd)

Just--

--but falls back down into the aisle.

RABBI (CONT'D) (cont'd)

--you...

I won't let you do this...

I still love you...

I still *believe*...

I still have *hope*...

I still have *faith*...

I still want you to *use* me!

Use me, please!

I belong to you!

I have nothing else but you!

Nothing else...

Nothing else but...

You...

Rabbi is on his knees at the foot of the stage.

THE ETERNAL LIGHT IS BLEEDING LIGHT, a glowing, unFOCUSED ORB.

The broken Torah lay in pieces in front of him.

RABBI (cont'd)

All I *want*...

All I *need*...

Is...

Just a sign...

Show me you want me...

Show me a sign...

Oh God, a sign...

Please

A sign...

Make me...

Useful...

Rabbi hears something.

THE FRONT DOORS are CREAKING.

The WIND HOWLS in pain.

The doors SMASH OPEN.

Rabbi turns and looks back as:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

THE GHOST OF BEN COHEN walks into the Synagogue.

With effort, Rabbi rises to his feet.

The Ghost of Ben Cohen approaches Rabbi.

BEN COHEN'S GHOST
Rabbi...

THE GHOST OF BEN COHEN takes Rabbi' face in his hands.

BEN COHEN'S GHOST (cont'd)
I love you. And I forgive you.

Rabbi releases the PISTOL -- it falls to the floor.

THE GHOST kisses Rabbi on the lips.

Rabbi falls to the ground and kisses THE GHOST'S FEET.

When Rabbi look up, he sees MICHAEL looking down at him.

Rabbi passes out.

FADE TO BLACK.

55	FADE IN:	55
56	INT. SYNAGOGUE OFFICE - EARLY MORNING	56

Rabbi is on his back, on the large wooden desk.

Michael is dressing his gunshot wound.

Silence for a long beat; then:

MICHAEL
I saw what you did out there. Really
messed things up.

RABBI
That's an understatement.
(then)
You put the Torah back in the ark...

MICHAEL
Did what I could.
(then)
Hold still.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RABBI

Michael...I didn't know you could take out a bullet.

MICHAEL

No bullet here. Went clean through. In right there and out your shoulder.

(then)

When you're in a gang you learn lots of things. Some good...some not so good.

(then)

This falls into the "not so good" category.

A long silence.

RABBI

Don't worry about calling the police -- I know you are --worried -- please, don't be. I'll do it myself, right after the service.

MICHAEL

The only thing I'm worried about is you, Rabbi.

RABBI

Everything born during the six days of creation needs work: the sour seed needs to be sweetened, the soy bean needs to be soaked in water, wheat needs to be ground, and the human being needs to be repaired. I need to be repaired, Michael. *I need to be repaired.*

MICHAEL

Once, Rabbi, when I complained about migraine headaches keeping me up all night, you said I should read something -- maybe that would help get me to sleep, help "repair" me.

RABBI

I remember.

MICHAEL

You said check out the bible. The Gospels. A wise suggestion. Put me right to sleep.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RABBI

Unlike me, Christ was a good Rabbi.

MICHAEL

You're more alike than you think.

(then)

Take the story of Christ's passion. Now there's a story that *didn't* put me to sleep. In fact, it did the opposite -- I couldn't stop thinking about it. So I thought, I should talk to you. Now, this may hurt a little, Rabbi...

Michael is sewing up the wound. Rabbi reacts to the PAIN.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Christ's passion, Rabbi. At least that's what they call it. But I think it's wrong to think of it as Christ's passion.

RABBI

What do you mean?

MICHAEL

We think too much about the actual pain, the physical pain. Pain is bad, but there are worse things.

Rabbi looks at Michael.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

There must be millions of people on this earth right now that are suffering at least as much as Christ did. I mean physically. And longer, too. I mean, how long did he suffer, anyway? About four hours, right?

RABBI

About four hours, yes.

MICHAEL

What I'm getting at, what I think, is that there is a kind of suffering, a much greater kind of suffering than the physical.

Rabbi looks at Michael with newly awakened respect.

RABBI

Yes. Like Gethsemane.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MICHAEL

All his disciples asleep. They don't understand a thing, not the last supper, nothing. The law arrives, they run. And Peter denies him. For three years Christ talks to these disciples, Rabbi, day and night they live together. And they still don't have any idea what he's talking about. They just don't get it.

(then)

Lemme help you on your side.

Rabbi fights his pain as Michael helps him turn over.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

They abandon him, all his disciples abandon him. And he's left alone. Now that to me is suffering. To realize that no one understands you. To be abandoned when you really need someone.

RABBI

Yes. I know you would never abandon me, Michael. Nor I you.

MICHAEL

But that isn't the worst thing. When Christ is nailed up on the cross and hangs there in his pain, he cries out: "God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." He cries out, Rabbi, but no one answers him. Has his Father in Heaven abandoned him too? Is everything he's been preaching false? The moment before Christ died was the one and only moment of doubt in his life. Now *that* is hard core suffering. Don't you think, Rabbi?

RABBI

Yes.

MICHAEL

Rabbi..?

Rabbi looks at him.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Whatever happens, you're a good man. You helped me, saved me, changed my life. And for that...I love you. I love you like you were my own father.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RABBI (cont'd)
Please.

Slowly, Zane takes his hand.

ZANE
Don't say it...I forgive you.

58 INT. SYNAGOGUE - CONTINUOUS

58

Michael watches as Rabbi leads Zane up the aisle to a seat.

Zane sits.

Rabbi continues up onto the stage.

Zane and Michael watch as

Rabbi opens the Ark and bows in front of it.

RABBI
Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord
is one.

CONGREGATION
Here O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord
is one.

Rabbi stands up and turns a pale but calm face to his
Congregation.

RABBI
Before we continue the evening service, I
have something to tell you...
(then, slowly at first)
Last night I saw a large, gaping,
hideously dark void. And it called out
to me: "help me, help me...I need you to
tell the truth," it said, "I WANT YOU TO
TELL THE TRUTH." Now I have a big
fuckin' problem with that cause' no one
wants to hear the truth. And even if
anyone did want to hear it, I have no
fucking idea what *the truth* is.

*
*
*
*
*

Michael, Zane and the other members the congregation listen
with growing concern as Rabbi continues.

During the following, the CAMERA moves back over the
Congregation to the last row, where--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

A TIMID MAN gets up and heads for the doors.

RABBI (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Hey you! YOU!

The timid man stops walking in the aisle.

RABBI (cont'd)
Look at me. LOOK AT ME!

The timid man turns and looks at Rabbi.

RABBI (cont'd)
Where THE FUCK do you think you're going?!

The Man, eyes filling with tears, just stares at Rabbi.

RABBI (cont'd)
Sit down. SIT DOWN I SAY!

The Timid Man sits down. Michael is horrified by Rabbi's behavior.

Zane is not sure what to do, she's seen him like this before.

Rabbi is barely holding it together -- sweat streams down his face.

RABBI (cont'd)
I want to say first there was violence,
then religions, then science, then
technology, and now hate . Do you
understand what *I want to say*? Ben Cohen
is dead. Do you know what killed him? *I*
want to say...I hate you all. All of
you.

Michael approaches Rabbi, whispers something to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

RABBI (cont'd)
I'm not finished, *Michael*. Please let me
finish.

Michael backs up and slowly sits down. Rabbi turns back to the terrified Congregation.

RABBI (cont'd)
Why are you here? I'll tell you why.
Fear. *Fear* is why you are here. And I
know *what* I'm talking about. *Because--*

Tears stream down Michael's face as he listens.

Zane is beginning to realize where this is going.

Rabbi picks up a candle and lights it during the following:

RABBI (cont'd)
--Today I killed a man. It felt...*real*.
*I want to say that I think you should all
kill someone. It's wake your ass up.
And you can discover the new and improved
God. Hate.*

As Rabbi speaks, he uses the lit and--

HE LIGHTS HIS FATHER'S TALLEES ON FIRE.

RABBI (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Don't you see? HATE is the truth and I
am the lie! SO GET OUT OF HERE. RIGHT
NOW, GET OUT, ALL OF YOU GET THE FUCK
OUT!

But no one moves --the congregation is frightened, they don't know what to do.

Rabbi throws his burning Talles on the floor, where it begins to burn.

Now, as if he is struck by a thunderbolt, he holds his arms up in the air--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Everyone stands there, frozen, some crying.

Zane runs to Rabbi' side, kneels down by him and takes his hand in hers.

*

ZANE

Rabbi...look at me...don't leave me...I
love you...look at me...do you
hear?...don't leave me...DON'T YOU LEAVE
ME!

Michael kneels by Rabbi, holding his other hand, frozen, shocked, tears streaming down his face.

*

Rabbi looks into Zane's eyes -- a beatific look on his face, which is GLOWING.

RABBI

In your eyes...Zane...I see it...

Indeed the FIRE LIGHT from the still burning Tallies is reflected in Zane's pupils--

RABBI (cont'd)

...you are so very beautiful.

MICHAEL

Rabbi...The river makes the banks make
the river makes the banks...

*
*
*

Rabbi looks up at Michael and smiles.

*

Then he dies.

*

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END.