



Source: Conal Urquhart, ' Hamas minister takes \$20m into Gaza', *Guardian Unlimited*, 15/06/06.

Tags: [Israel](#), [racism](#), [crime](#), [death](#), [husband/wife](#)
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In truth, yeah, he probably had gone a little bit crazy.

Are we using that as a defence? Well, no, not as a defence, but as a reason. Aren't you interested in reasons?

Because if you don't want to talk about reasons well, I could go somewhere else with my story. You're not the only one who wants to speak with me, you know, who's offering me—well yes, okay, where was I now?

So, I tried to tell him to give the job up, to go home, take us back home to Austin before it got too bad, but no, he had a mission for it, he was crazy for it, this job, these people. Despite all the fighting, he was determined to stay in Israel. He was Jewish, he used to say. Actually he was only part Jewish, because, you know, it's carried down through the women and it was his father who was Jewish. His mother came from the mid west. I won't say trash, but you know what I mean. The overdone hair, the overdone smile. Not to mention her bust. But that's beside the point. The point is, and yes, I'll get to the point sir, in the end, but you will need to allow me to speak, to tell my story; the point is that he was obsessive about this Jewish stuff.

Well, you know, the Jewish question; what to do, how to really claim Israel, what to do about Palestine. And like I told you, he wasn't even Jewish. Dale was a reporter for the *Austin Times*, the only paper worth reading in the whole of Texas, and he would report on the situation in Israel, was the Middle-East correspondent. But in truth the situation had been getting pretty bad; no, not just the politics, that comes and goes but no, for him personally.

I guess you could say he was being bullied.

Yes sir, bullied, and no, I'm not using that as an excuse either because really there is no excuse for what he did, but in part I think one could say that he was a victim of circumstance.

Huh?

Well because that situation pushed him to the point where he would—well, you know what he did, don't you?

That Nikki, she hated him. She hated me too, but I grew up playing netball.

Sorry?

Well sir, netball makes you tough. Any of your daughters play netball? Oh I see, fine. Only boys. Stupid of me.

Anyway she had us over a barrel. She ran the only decent shop around. I mean, who wants to walk twenty minutes in gunfire for some gum? So we had to go there. And she used to go crazy the minute we walked in the shop. Especially if Dale went in alone.

Am I saying she was crazy? No. What's with this crazy? We're living in a goddam war, people get tense.

And another thing, she was very short-sighted. You know, it's common. For them. And she had the wrong glasses. They were all she could get. And they made her cranky. She just couldn't see properly. Couldn't see to think.

Anyway, she had it in for him. The minute he'd come in the shop, she'd start with the mock American accent. 'Oh my,' she'd say, 'Dale! You are looking smart today. I do like your tie. What do you reckon, Miriam, isn't Dale's tie real smart? I'm surprised he didn't get it in spots.

And so it went on, month after month. Every day, every minute he was in the store. It was inevitable, sir, really it was. No, it's not an excuse, but, what's a man to do? I mean, she pushed him to the edge. And it was when she started in on the Jewish, that's when he really got wound up. That's when it got dangerous. She was used to danger. It probably turned her on.

No, I told you, of course, there's no excuses, but he is a human being, and she goaded him, goaded him for a long, long time. And so when she started in on the Jewish stuff, that was it, he started to burn. 'Oh!' she'd say, 'Here he is, our little pretzel, our own sweet matzo, as Jewish as my aunt Hannah, right down the end of his you know what...intact? No! Real nice, real authentic Jew boy. When you starting with the curls, Dale?'

I don't know exactly where he got the suitcases. But you know, I suspect he bought them from Nikki's aunt. She has a business, selling suitcases from her basement. All cardboard, but she does a roaring trade. Clumps down there, two, three times a day. What do they need with all those suitcases? Keeping things packed for the next exodus or what? I don't know exactly sir, but I guess he enjoyed the irony. He has a streak of the poetic in him.

Oh, but you know that, don't you?

And I guess he got the electric saw from Nikki's brother's butcher shop, yeah, the big one, in the old city. And I suppose he just paid American dollars to have someone take them over the border. Those twelve suitcases. With their terrible cargo. I guess they thought it was money.

You found them all in the end, didn't you sir?

As to where he got that velvet jewellery case, you know, the one for the mouth...who knows. Matched nicely with her cash register though, I did think that. And displayed so carefully. I told you he was poetic.

So I think that's it, sir. That's all I have to tell you. That's my story, and I'm sticking to it. As they say.

I 'spose it'll save you, on the admin.

The jewellery case.

I mean, whoever it belonged to, I'm guessing they won't be wanting it back.

Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Caroline Lee.