



Source: Tim Butcher, 'Israel to back armed Palestinians', *Telegraph* in *The Age*, 16/11/06.
Tags: [Lebanon](#), [Israel](#), [violence](#), [streets](#)
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Yo La Tengo sings: 'Hey Mister Tough, don't you think we've suffered enough? Why don't you meet me on the dance floor...' From the album: *I'm not afraid of you and I will beat your ass*. 'Pretend everything will be alright.'

Hope you like it. I will use all hope to draw up strength and strategies for prevention. I have the technology. I will use references from my inbox to counter all violence today. It is a vain attempt. Vain hope. It is all I can do.

It is just that hope is something most of my friends don't believe in. Vicki won't even use the word any more. But someone else might need it. Because Zena writes from Beirut today. Three friends of hers were injured in bullet shower. Shot down by the Israeli army. Zena calls for an end to all of this, the things she sees around her every day, her city in ruins, once again, seemingly hopeless, a city she loves and I can only hope to understand. Only this story today: Zena's friends together in their car waiting for some kunafa, a van circling. An m-16 in view. And then 'The three of us hit the floor of the car. All around us...shooting, shooting, shooting. So close. So close. Israeli secret service...dressed up like an Arab'. I quote Zena quoting her sister Annemarie.

'Nothing much is happening in Beirut, we go on from day to day looking forward to that moment when we can come and go to our homeland without any restrictions or special permission. Regards to all in Bethlehem. Yours, Edward'—June 12th, 1968 (letter from my uncle to his family).

Annemarie's email signature today. Today (now yesterday), she sees 'them' crawling the streets. In and out of vans. Makes me think of classic serial killer scenarios. Bodies captured by some random psychopath and dumped in the back of an anonymous white van. News from Beirut. Hope this ends. Men with guns. Annemarie once again: 'Mustarabeen'...Israeli agents who dress like Arabs. Guns from vans. Just waiting for kunafa. Then the shooting. Oh god, the sound. Put your hands over your heads. Was that a direct hit? Two sisters and a curator. Where did all these men come from? Some army, some agents. Mobile call from Mohammed, the fear in Annemarie's voice. What is happening? Is happening

again?

Zena reminds us: it is all too familiar and it must end. Otherwise hope must die. Or as Annemarie says: 'I think I will die today. I am going to die today. We are all okay. Nothing happened. There's a bullet in the car. It hit the back of the car. It didn't hit the gas tank. It didn't hit the gas tank. We are okay. But three young men tonight are not. And many, many more are not. This is nothing new, nothing out of the ordinary.' So now here is some spreading of word. Word came to me from Zena—call it spread—spoken by me who does not know the reference but it has to be said: hope must die. Something else to replace it.

Zena's blog words have kept us (all) connected to her since that day in July. Her latest entry tells us that her dear friend has just lost her battle with cancer with a picture of her friend dressed as Wonder Woman.

This is no official announcement. This is no attempt to speak on behalf of. Just a recount of a day in Beirut where four friends drive through a city street, out for some kunafa. Something from Annemarie, the filmmaker, and her passengers: her sister and a curator friend and Mohammed who went for sweets. Kunafa: It is made from cheese and flour, sugar, water and lemon. It is extremely sweet and irresistible. Waiting, waiting, waiting on the floor of the car thinking that putting your hands over your head is sort of ridiculous, the car windows smashed, a bullet left behind. The guy in disguise goes back to the van. Some other guy is grabbed off the street and thrown in the back. Annemarie's car is side-swiped, some damage, but relatively safe. Another day in the middle of a shoot out. Trapped in a car with nowhere to go.

Where to now then? Operation over. From one city to another. I have no stories to return to Annemarie or Zena. Only those passed on via proxy. 'There are only bad options and we need to choose the least bad of all.' Hope you like it.

Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Jason Sweeney, Unreasonable Adults.