

DON'T ASK MY NAME

Screenplay Written by Raquel Roderick

DRAFT: JULY 28, 2026

Inspired by True Events

© April 16 2026
Registration Number
PAu 4-319-235

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CONTENT WARNING: This screenplay contains depictions of wartime violence, military conflict, gun violence, explosions, and civilian casualties. It includes intense scenes of peril involving children, depictions of grief, fatal injuries, brief references to hanging, and mild thematic drug use (underage smoking and reference to opium).

PROLOGUE

1 INT. U.N.W.R.A BUS - DAY

LEBANON, 1967

The air is a thick, sweltering haze of dust and diesel. Heat waves shimmer against the scratched glass, blurring the Lebanese hills into a smear of tan and olive green.

Inside, worn and tired passengers sway in a rhythmic, hollow unison. Their eyes are flat, fixed on the middle distance.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

They used to call it the Paris of the Middle East a bastion of Christendom hosting a fragile, harmonious space with the Druze, Sunni, and Shia. But the tides were shifting.

An ELDERLY MAN clutches a cardboard suitcase tied with twine; A YOUNG MOTHER holds a bundle to her chest. A little boy, clutching to a teddy bear, ZAYAN (9) sits alone, a bandage across a wound on the side of his forehead. His mess of curly hair scraping his long beautiful black eyelashes.

The bus groans as it hits a deep rift in the dirt road, its tires kicking up a plume of orange dust.

2 INT. TEL AL ZAATAR REFUGEE CAMP - DAY

NARRATOR (V.O.)

After the 6 day war, borders didn't just bend; they buckled. The Filastiniyeen arrived in waves. Broken, carrying the raw, open wounds of displacement. We didn't see their humiliation, instead, we looked and saw ourselves; only our last names setting us apart.

The dust clears. We are no longer looking at the hills, but a sea of UNRWA tents stretching into the heat haze, scarred with indigo Arabic script; Graffiti declaring divided allegiance.

The bus comes to a halt. ZAYAN rises to a swamp of SCUFFLING ADULTS. He searches their faces for a sign, a direction, a hand. Nothing.

3.

3 EXT. TEL AL ZAATAR REFUGEE CAMP - DAY

Makeshift washing lines, torn clothing. Sounds of babies crying, hungry dogs bark.

ZAYAN lugs his battered suitcase down the steps and onto the parched Lebanese earth.

NARRATOR

In the vacuum of a shattered world,
despair became fertile soil...

Behind an old rusty barbed wire fence - four little boys of similar age, already stare back at him with eyes somehow older than their years. Sullen but curious.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The most vulnerable became easy prey
for the architects of extremism; some
offered the false dignity of a rifle
in exchange for their souls.

Behind them, resting in the shade of a dusty canvas tent, is a REFUGEE MAN in his late 20's.

Other refugees keep a distance as they walk by.

He sits with a predatory stillness, cleaning a small piece of machinery with a rag.

He wears a faded fatigue jacket. When he looks up, a knowing smile creeps across his face as his gaze locks eyes with ZAYAN.

4 EXT. JURI VILLAGE. THE WALL - DAY

The Christian Village of Juri, Balaat, Lebanon. Late afternoon sun hangs heavy casting long, amber shadows across the valley.

OMAR (7), small, wiry, and vibrating with anticipation. His hair also a cute mess of dark curls stares out across the ancient and quaint coastal village. He stands precariously atop a weathered limestone wall, his hand shielding his eyes as he scans the distance.

Beside him, his brother MOHAMMED (8), sits calmly perched on the wall edge, his legs dangling. A packet of cigarettes poke out from the pocket on his shirt. His sultry face already

4.

settling into a look of quiet maturity. He ingests his surroundings like that of a weary father.

Suddenly, the sound of an engine is heard just as a 1960's Peugeot appears around the corner.

OMAR | MOHAMMED
Rej'ou! Rej'ou! (They're back! They're back)

The brothers leap from the wall, scrambling toward the road alerting neighbours of the Peugeot's arrival. A modern black mercedes drives past.

From the houses, an OLD WOMAN flings open her shutters and lets out a piercing ululation - a call that ripples through the air until other VILLAGE WOMEN join in.

5 INT. PEUGEOT. JURI - DAY

Sitting squashed between the bride and groom on the back seat is TONY (7), disheveled and adorable, swallowed by a hand-me-down wedding suit with sleeves bunched at his wrists. His thick straight dark hair falls into his large eyes as he blows the wisps away.

He looks up at the bride, CARLA DAYGER (16), sitting stiffly in a white lacy traditional gown. With long dark curls framing her face, She possesses a delicate grace, with beauty untouched by vanity. Though quiet by nature, there is an unmistakable steadiness in her eyes.

He looks up at his big brother, ELI DAYGER (21), who flashes back a smile. Handsome in a crisp white shirt and brown suit, he carries himself with an easy warmth. There's nothing arrogant about him. He moves through the world gently, like a protector who doesn't yet realize he is one.

In the front, his father, JOSEPH DAYGER (53), steers the heavy car. His face is a map of village life, weathered by sun, work, and responsibility; the deep set lines around his eyes speak of a quiet fierceness and a matured protective love for the family with him.

Beside JOSEPH is his wife MAMA PIA DAYGER (45), small in stature but impossible to miss - a woman of weathered beauty formidable warmth and spark.

The air vibrates with the rhythmic thrum of middle eastern drums and happy music. The VILLAGERS flock to the slow-moving car, the WOMEN thrust dishes at the car like offerings.

5.

A blizzard of white rice and flower petals rains down on the hood. ELI'S FRIENDS swarm the Peugeot, laughing and drumming their palms against the metal panels.

FRIEND

Lover boy!

ELI leans out the window laughing as he extends his arm. The young men slap his hand playfully.

ELI

I smell your bad breath from here

ELI leans back in to his seat glancing over at his wife. Her eyes wide taking in the moment. As the car rounds the last bend, her gaze drifts upward.

Through the windshield, high on the ridge, El Nourieh church stands as a stone sentinel. It looms over the town, peaceful and stoic against the blue sky.

ELI (CONT'D)

El Nourieh (of the light)

CARLA

Where they saw a miraculous guiding
light

The couple shyly smile as if talking to each other is new.

JOSEPH drives cautiously into the welcoming crowd honking the horn.

A proud MUSLIM WOMAN wearing her hijab, pushes to the front, also holding a dish.

MUSLIM WOMAN

Ismallah 'alayeha! Malki! (God bless
her! She's a queen)

This time, MAMA PIA laughs as she winds down the car window.

MAMA PIA

You join us for an Arak FARAH?
(moonshine)

MUSLIM WOMAN

Yi, lah lah lah lah (Oh, no, no, no)

JOSEPH laughs pulling the car to the curb.

6.

JOSEPH

You are going to give Farah a heart
attack one of these days

ELI laughs catching his wife's reaction to all the chaos.

ELI

Your new family

6 EXT. THE STREET. JURI VILLAGE - DAY

ELI steps out of the vehicle, trailed by TONY, beaming with
pride.

ELI's best friend, NICOLAS (21), reaches him first, pulling
him into a fierce embrace. Smartly dressed, hair brushed
perfectly to one side his eyes flick over the crowd, as if
instinctively taking stock of who is where.

ELI

Nicolas!

NICOLAS

Tonight is the night ELI

NICOLAS pulls back and pats ELI'S chest.

NICOLAS (CONT'D)

Does she know you don't have a hairy
chest?

ELI

Come back here!

ELI grabs NICOLAS and pulls him in for another hug.

A voice slices through the air - firm, unmistakable. TETA
(82) a short, rotund and formidable woman, with soft skin,
rosy cheeks and squinty eyes pushes through the crowd.

TETA

ELI Daygar! Did you forget already?

He turns - follows her gaze to the car.

CARLA still sits inside, alone. The VILLAGERS peer through
the windows to get a good look.

ELI'S smile collapses. He quickly stops to hug and kiss his
grandmother before racing to his wife.

7.

ELI
Teta!! (Grandma!) She is all I think
about

Over her shoulder, he can see MAMA PIA lighting up the street handing out Baklava sweets to the children. He spots a PRIEST slowly pulling up in the black mercedes.

FATHER MICHAEL (70), a gentle, soft-bellied man climbs out, his eyes warm and patient. JOSEPH is there to greet him.

ELI (CONT'D)
The priest came back?

TETA
Of course he has a blessing for you

ELI
(laughing)
Aah Teta! (Grandma!) We already had
hocus-pocus at the wedding!

TETA
That hocus-pocus will save your
marriage, saraha!(honestly!) Go - you
already start on the wrong foot!

ELI rushes to the car. CARLA steps out to a loud cheer and more showers of rice and flower petals.

CARLA smiles waving to onlookers greeting her like royalty.

Amidst the cheerful shouting, a brief look of concern crosses ELI'S face as he catches MAMA PIA approaching a woman, reputed for being a NIGHT WORKER, slouching in her door frame.

ELI notices the VILLAGE WOMEN nearby pointedly adjusting their shawls, turning their backs.

MAMA PIA gently pulls the lady just a few inches out of the shadows where she's joyfully pulled into the crowd by the younger less judging generation.

MAMA PIA rejoins her son, ELI leans in.

ELI
Aunties are looking...what if the
Priest sees...

CARLA picks up on ELI'S awkwardness but MAMA PIA doesn't stop

walking. She keeps her head high, her smile fixed for the crowd.

MAMA PIA
Let him! People look at the dirt
because they are afraid to look at the
sky, ELI

MAMA PIA pats ELI'S cheek.

MAMA
Now, you walk! Your father and that
Priest will be drinking all the Arak
(moonshine) by themselves

A YOUNG MOTHER approaches the couple with her son AIYA (5),
he holds out the dish his mother has made.

YOUNG MOTHER
Did you see my Fattoush Salad through
the window?. AIYA's favourite!

CARLA nods gratefully. AIYA blushes as she brushes her hand
over his cheek. Another villager impatiently pushes them out
of the way.

BUSYBODY
You will love my Kibbet Lakteen
(pumpkin patties)

She leans in, lowering her voice.

BUSYBODY (CONT'D)
Watch out for the Shish Touk (Chicken
kabob)

CARLA strains her head to listen.

BUSYBODY (CONT'D)
That is her cousin...

The BUSY BODY gives a subtle look of warning before
disappearing into the crowd.

CARLA glances to her right - a snobby, unhappy JEALOUS GIRL
glares back at her.

CARLA quickly looks away to find MARIE (16), ELI'S younger

sister. A breathless vision in an oversized bridesmaid gown coming toward her. Her especially styled long dark hair is coming undone as she thrusts a bouquet of flowers at CARLA.

MARIE

Carla! You can't go inside

CARLA

Thank you...sister

The girls giggle.

MARIE

I like how that sounds

CARLA

Oh My God Marie can you believe it?

CARLA is whisked away through the crowd as MARIE calls out after her.

MARIE

It is you and me against all the boys
- help finally

7 EXT. VILLAGE WALL. JURI VILLAGE - DAY

Brothers MOHAMMED and OMAR climb back up to sit on the wall, their legs dangle over the edge.

MOHAMMED pulls out a cigarette and clumsily lights it.

TONY appears on the path below them. He climbs up from the ground, grinning.

OMAR

Did it grow?

TONY

Smooth like your baby butt, ya.

OMAR

Shu (what), Shhesh. You said he would get a hairy chest once he got married

TONY

Charbel told me

MOHAMMED drags on his cigarette like a wiseman.

MOHAMMED

They get a hairy chest when a baby comes, that's when it happens...want some?

TONY shakes his head no.

ISHAK (7), comes running and puffing down the road, small and plump with dark auburn red, tousled hair.

He skids to a stop in the street, eyes flashing indignation as he looks up at his friends perched above pointing toward the crowd.

ISHAK

ELI... he has no... hairy chest!

ISHAK climbs up to join the boys. Mohammed passes ISHAK the cigarette.

MOHAMMED

They might kiss in your house tonight

MOHAMMED and OMAR light up as TONY'S face expresses mild shock.

TONY

But that is how a baby comes

MOHAMMED starts making exaggerated kissing /smooching faces.

MOHAMMED

OMAR! watch! watch!mmmm wmmmm
ooooh mmmmm

8 INT. SHED. DAYGAR HOUSE - DAY

An old backyard shed. The sound of distant laughter filters in from the street.

Along the back wall, 2 rifles stand in a neat line, aged and polished. Dried skinned rabbits hang above them. On the desk an old walky talky.

The old scarred workbench, sits beneath an old salt damaged dirty window frame. Through the dusty pane we see a row of peaceful white beach houses and the shimmering, blue of the sea.

The door bursts open and the single light bulb dangling from the rafter turns on.

11.

JOSEPH walks inside with FATHER MICHAEL. The men are jolly as JOSEPH bends down to pull out a crate of home brewed Arak(moonshine) from beneath the work bench.

JOSEPH

Look...

He takes a key hanging from the wall and opens the drawer under his desk.

FATHER MICHAEL

Hee hee will they still let me be a priest?

JOSEPH holds up the cigar like a trophy.

JOSEPH

Do you know what this is?

FATHER MICHAEL

Smoke from the revolutionaries?

JOSEPH

Straight from Havana

FATHER MICHAEL leans in, eyes twinkling.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

For the wedding of the year? God will forgive you

JOSEPH places the box in his pocket, before bending down to pick up the crate.

FATHER MICHAEL spots and picks up the newspaper on the bench
L'HEURE DE LA VÉRITÉ : LE CESSEZ-LE-FEU EST TOTAL EN 6 JOURS
(The Hour Of Truth: The Ceasefire Is Total In 6 Days).

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Yesterday's news

FATHER MICHAEL

An entire war in 6 days. Egypt lost everything, even Gaza

JOSEPH

That wasn't a loss, abouna (father).
That was a lesson

He scans the paper, while JOSEPH opens himself a bottle from the crate.

FATHER MICHAEL
And what is the lesson?

JOSEPH
How fast borders move when you look
away

FATHER MICHAEL
Ai - give me one of those

JOSEPH opens a second bottle.

JOSEPH
To borders that move when men drink

FATHER MICHAEL laughs and clinks his bottle with JOSEPH.

FATHER MICHAEL
I saw the Abdullah boys on the wall
again

JOSEPH
Which one had the cigarette?

FATHER MICHAEL
Mohammed..

JOSEPH
And my son?...tell me

FATHER MICHAEL
Tony? No! - he might be puffing now,
how do I know?

JOSEPH
Eh!

FATHER MICHAEL
Leave him - the Bible does not say a
word about cigarettes...

JOSEPH
But listen to my theory...

He taps the newspaper the PRIEST is holding.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
The Arab armies are shattered. They
already organize underground
committe...

FATHER MICHAEL
What are you talking? The refugees?

JOSEPH
Today, the old rules die

FATHER MICHAEL
The Deuxième Bureau does not allow it
- not even flyers

JOSEPH
A piece of paper from Beirut is not
going to stop another wave of
Falistinyeah. I tell you...they are
recruiting right under our noses

TETA calls over the walky talky from the back porch. It's
clear she struggles with technology.

TETA
Hello? Is it on? Hello? JOSEPH!
Waynak? (Where are you?) 'Am nfattich
'alayk! (We're looking for you!)

JOSEPH
Why does their father go to Tel al
Zataar? hmm?

FATHER MICHAEL
He is UNWRA - you know it

JOSEPH
Conspiring is what I know

FATHER MICHAEL
You are the conspirator...of theories

The walky talky makes a ringing sound.

FATHER MICHAEL (CONT'D)
They are hungry, displaced,
humiliated. Not every hand extended is
recruiting for war

Outside, the celebration swells - a drum, women ululating.

JOSEPH
Boys like that - the extremists will
find a use for them eventually, if we
don't first

FATHER MICHAEL

Our people are good, Joseph. Muslim,
Christian - All Gods creation.
Extremism is a sickness and it cannot
win. We must not let it stop us. We
must believe what we do is worth it

The Priests point lands

TETA

Can he hear me? Hello? Hello?

JOSEPH

You are good for me Priest - Come I
don't want to get in trouble

9 EXT. FRONT DOOR. DAYGAR HOUSE - DAY

ELI and CARLA reach the Daygar family house courtyard, the
villagers trickling through the gate behind them.

FATHER MICHAEL and JOSEPH are already waiting on the step by
the front door. ELI gestures CARLA forward.

ELI

Now, the most important part

CARLA steps forward.

TETA

Ya Mahrouseh. (My protected one.) Take
the khamiret el-'rous (blessed bridal
dough)

The courtyard goes silent. CARLA, with her hands shaking
slightly, takes the khamiret el-'arous presented by TETA.

TETA (CONT'D)

Now, for the blessing

CARLA presses the khamiret el-'arūs to the door frame above
the lintel while ELI briefly looks back to acknowledge the
crowd, locking eyes briefly with his Mother.

TONY ducks through the forest of legs in the crowd then
clings to MAMA PIA'S skirt as she watches on proudly.

Brothers, and MOHAMMED slip through to stand beside them with
ISHAK in tow. MAMA PIA pulls the boys in close as if they too
are family. She pulls out the packet of cigarettes in
MOHAMMED'S pocket and gives him a firm motherly look.