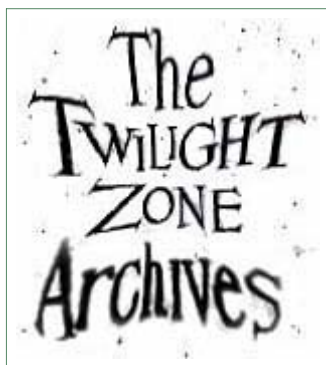




DesertPeace

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ANOTHER BEATING~~ ANOTHER DEAD PALESTINIAN YOUTH



Welcome again to the [Twilight Zone](#), another dimension. It is "a dimension of sound, a dimension of sight, a dimension of mind", "a place of things and ideas", "between the pit of Man's fears, and the summit of his knowledge." "The twilight zone" in a nutshell, is the mind and imagination of man, where any thought can become a reality.

Unfortunately for Palestinians it is a very ugly, daily reality. The latest episode is presented by Gideon Levy of HaAretz...

Twilight Zone / 'The terrorist was neutralized'

By Gideon Levy

The taxi to Bethlehem was delayed, and Jihad stood at the dusty taxi stand and waited. He was on his way to the Open University in Bethlehem, to register for the upcoming school year. His father says that he hadn't decided what he wanted to study. Maybe that's what he was thinking about while he stood at the stand, exposed to the burning sun.

And what was going through the heads of the soldiers who beat him mercilessly, with a club, with the butt of a rifle and with kicks to his head, so that he died? Is it possible that he tried to attack them with a knife, even though two eyewitnesses didn't see it? Even if he did, why did the soldiers continue to beat him, even

About Me



Name:
Desert Peace
Location:
Jerusalem, Israel

Active Peace/Civil Rights Worker.. Aiming to establish a just and lasting peace between Israel and Palestine, while at the same time continue the struggle against racism and for peace throughout the world. Email me at.. manopeace@gmail.com

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after he lay on the ground, unconscious and perhaps bound as well, as an eyewitness told us? And what kind of monstrous behavior is it to handcuff the bereaved father, and then leave him on the ground, in front of the body of his beaten and dying son? Above all, why did the Israel Defense Forces rush to dismiss this grave incident, "after an initial investigation," during which nobody interrogated the eyewitnesses, with the conclusion, "the soldiers acted properly"?

Pictures of Jihad Shaar's death flicker on the computer screen: The battered and calm face of a young man with three holes in his skull, in front and in back. Also a picture of the bereaved father, Khalil, a worker in a Bethlehem factory that manufactures olive-wood souvenirs, his hands bound behind his back, kneeling on the floor, his face radiating restrained pain and humiliation, and the soldier standing next to him with a drawn weapon - everything is documented on the computer screen. The stone houses stand at the edge of the desert, in the village of Tekoa, on a mountainside opposite the archaeological site of Herodion and the Jewish settlement also called Tekoa. The area is usually quiet, with the exception of the annoying IDF patrols.

Khalil, with bristles of mourning on his face, is a gentle and quiet man. They say that his son was like that, too. The day after the incident, the Israeli press asserted that Jihad was mentally unstable, perhaps even disabled. It's all a fabrication. Last year Jihad studied hard to improve his matriculation exam grades and now he was supposed to register for the Bethlehem branch of the Al-Quds Open University.

On Friday, July 27, the family awoke as usual, the mother of the family went for a family visit and Jihad planned to travel to the university. Nothing in the house testified to what was to take place a short time later. Jihad, like the rest of his family, had never been arrested.

At 9:30 A.M., Jihad left the house and walked the several hundred meters to the taxi stand near the road to Bethlehem. His father, who was at home, says that Jihad took nothing with him. But the armored Hummer was already standing at the side of the road, several dozen meters from the taxi stand. There is almost always a Hummer standing there, a kind of surprise roadblock for the village's residents, where soldiers check papers, harass and humiliate, and maintain proper order on the road.

As Jihad stood alone at the stand, the soldiers apparently called him to approach them. A Palestinian policeman, Musa Suleiman, was riding to Bethlehem at the time in a taxi that was approaching the stand. Suleiman saw Jihad walking "with ordinary steps, in a manner that did not arouse any suspicion," toward the soldiers. He says that Jihad had nothing in his hands.

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One soldier stood next to the driver's door of the Hummer, and another three soldiers sat inside. When Jihad reached the Hummer, Suleiman says he saw the soldier grab Jihad by the shirt and pull him forcibly behind the vehicle. Suleiman, who was already about 20 meters from the vehicle, says that apparently an argument broke out between Jihad and the soldier who grabbed his shirt, which developed into a violent struggle between the two. A few seconds later he saw them both sprawled on the ground.

That's when the other three soldiers got out of the Hummer. Suleiman heard two shots. The four soldiers, according to Suleiman, began beating Jihad, who was sprawled on the ground. They used wooden clubs and their rifle butts, while Jihad tried to protect his head with his hands. That was all Suleiman saw, because the taxi, which was traveling slowly, then passed the Hummer.

When the taxi was a few dozen meters away from the area of the beatings, it drove back to see what was happening behind the Hummer. Suleiman says that the soldiers continued to beat Jihad. He saw the club land on Jihad's head at least twice. "I felt that these were fatal beatings," says the policeman Suleiman. He says that Jihad was no longer moving. Suleiman rushed to Jihad's house to alert his father: "Come quickly, the soldiers are beating your son." Accompanied by Suleiman, he rushed in the direction of the stand.

When they approached the area, the soldiers aimed their weapons at them and ordered them to leave. One of the villagers who speaks Hebrew, who also arrived at the spot, tried to explain to the soldiers that Khalil was the father of the battered young man, and all he wanted was to know what had happened to his son. And then the soldier said: "Tell him that his son is already dead."

Then the soldiers handcuffed Khalil behind his back, and placed him on the road, the Hummer separating him from his son's body, while they chased the other two men away from the site. Meanwhile additional forces arrived, together with a military ambulance, whose squad apparently tried to save Jihad's life. After about 40 minutes during which he sat handcuffed in the sun, says Khalil, an officer from the Civil Administration, Taysir, arrived and ordered the soldiers to free the father from his handcuffs and told him that his son had been sent to the hospital in nearby Beit Jala.

The officer from the Civil Administration asked Khalil: "Why did your son do that?" The father: "My son was on the way to the university." The officer: "Your son made problems for the soldiers and pulled out a kitchen knife." Khalil to the officer: "My son did not leave the house with a knife. Show me the knife, I'm familiar with the knives in our kitchen."

"You want to see the knife?" asked the officer, who then immediately retracted his offer: "The Military Police have already removed the knife from the site." Khalil didn't see the knife.

Taysir told Khalil that Jihad was seriously wounded. Khalil called his brother and together they drove quickly toward the hospital. On the way they were delayed again, in the same place where his son was killed. Only after about 10 minutes were they allowed to continue, after the intercession of one of the soldiers who had seen Khalil in the area earlier and recognized him.

Jihad had been evacuated from the site at about 11:15. A short time later his father arrived at the hospital. But his son's body reached Beit Jala only at about 3 P.M. The officer from the Civil Administration had told the father that his son was "seriously wounded," but the soldier had told him even earlier that Jihad had died, and therefore Khalil had no hope of seeing his son alive again. He talks about everything in an amazing tone of acceptance and restraint.

When the body arrived at the hospital the doctors examined it. They determined that Jihad had not been shot, he had been beaten to death. They discovered the three superficial holes in his head and several bruises in other parts of his body, mainly around the hips. The body was sent for an autopsy in Abu Dis, and afterward was brought for burial; the funeral was well attended. Several residents of the village say that when they began to dig the grave, a Border Patrol Hummer arrived at the village and its passengers called out in Arabic on a loudspeaker: "Jihad is dead. Let Allah have mercy on him and your mother's c - - -."

The IDF spokesman, this week: "On July 26, in the course of operational activity by an IDF patrol near the village of Hirbet al-Dir, east of Bethlehem, a Palestinian armed with a knife approached the patrol and tried to attack one of the soldiers. In response, the soldier fired at the terrorist and hit his lower body. After the Palestinian continued with his attempts to stab the soldier, another soldier who was present was forced to use a club in order to neutralize the terrorist. The Palestinian terrorist, who was seriously wounded, was given medical treatment on the spot by an IDF force and in the end he was declared dead."

A few cypress trees are planted on the slope at the foot of the place where Jihad was killed. Some faded bloodstains are still visible on the ground. The taxi stand is deserted. A Hummer observes us from the hill overlooking the road. We ascend the hill, passing the armored Hummer whose passengers, four soldiers in dark sunglasses, are laughing among themselves. Are these the soldiers who killed Jihad. Are they from the same unit?

In the handsome stone house with beehives in the yard, which

overlooks the taxi stand and the site of the killing, lives another eyewitness, Nur Harmas. On the day of the incident she awoke to the sound of the Hummer's engine below. Harmas says that she noticed a young man at the stand, waiting. She went inside and began to do her housework. After about 15 minutes she heard a dull noise. She cast a glance from the window and saw the stand empty. Jihad was no longer standing there. A cypress hides the place where the Hummer stood.

Harmas rushed to her bedroom, opened the door that leads to the balcony, from which one can see the place where the Hummer stood. "I saw the deceased lying on the ground, his hands handcuffed behind his back, with three soldiers standing around him, one of them kicking his head. The moment I saw that, I rushed to the neighbors to call for help." She told her husband's cousin, who quickly went down to see what they were doing to Jihad.

Karim Jubran, an investigator from B'Tselem (the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories), takes out of his briefcase a pair of torn, white plastic handcuffs, which he found at the site of the incident. Was Jihad also handcuffed at the time when the soldiers beat him to death? Or are these the handcuffs with which the soldiers handcuffed the bereaved father, in front of his son's body? Does it make a difference?

posted by Desert Peace @ [12:24 AM](#)

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