

ENLISTED: WEST BANK - Extended
By Noah Smith

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1. A Long Way From Prom

Manny Carroll, 19, is not having such a great time in his hometown of Miami. Far from the glitzy clubs and tropical-looking beaches, he is toiling away at menial jobs, trying to support his family.

This has been Manny's life since his father died a couple years ago. He enrolled in community college, but washed out. The pressures of studying full time and working full time proved to be too much.

His dream was to become a doctor, but standing here, mopping a muggy, filthy restroom at 11:35 PM on a Tuesday, it seems more like a childish fantasy.

He does not see a path forward, living like this. And it doesn't help to constantly be surrounded by the wealth and high life he doesn't have. And even if he met a girl, he has no money for dates, nor his own place.

One day, over some Pizza Hut slices, his friend tells him about Americans who volunteer for the army in Israel. Crazy. But then again...exciting. Different. A fresh start. He finds out about a free plane ticket over there. And goes.

Manny is in an Israeli military uniform next to 2 fellow soldiers facing an angry mob full of men, women, and children.

A man uses one of the kids as a human shield and starts to advance towards Manny's position. Does he have a weapon? Or is he just trying to get out of this impending riot safely?

Suddenly, a rock hits Manny's comrade in the face. He drops to the ground, bloody and unconscious. A photojournalist appears, then 5 more, then 10.

Manny takes a breath, and notices that there is a Pizza Hut in the distance. Weirdly, it looks open.

The mob. The guy with the human shield. The injured soldier. The rock thrower. The

mission. The reporters.

Manny can feel his cellphone buzzing and he thinks about his American girlfriend back in Tel Aviv. The club she talked about going to this weekend sounded cool. And downright affordable too...

BAM! Something just exploded close to him. Shit. Should he retreat? Try to disperse the crowd? Finish the mission? Something else? Manny has to decide.

2. Enlisted

Americans have volunteered in foreign conflicts since George Washington advised against it. Our cast, American male and female volunteers in Israel, continue the tradition and will be tested to a degree they could not have imagined: on cold, lonely nights during watch duty, when bullets are snapping by their heads, during intense romances, and as their phones show them how much fun their friends are having in college as well as how much their parents are worrying.

In an unprecedented move, our production team has been granted exclusive access to follow these Americans in the Israeli military, who are enlisted, and fighting, in the world's most followed conflict.

ENLISTED: (8x45') is a military-based, coming of age docuseries that allows viewers to ride shotgun with their fellow Americans as they roll into one of the most bitterly-divided and highly scrutinized places in the world: the West Bank.

We will be following 2 groups of 3-5 young men and women, one group is in active duty, one is in U.S. about to enlist in Israel, as they make this journey, both into battle and into adult life.

Because of the setting, it will have all of the action, tension, and uncertainty of a war zone embed AND the young adult dramas of growing up including romances, finding a brotherhood/sisterhood, and determining what actually matters to them-- all while living thousands of miles away from home.

3. What is the narrative importance of being away from America- and why Israel?

Unlike the U.S. military, Israeli combat soldiers go back home from the base every couple weeks, even if they have no in-country family to go back to. These recesses provide a chance for us to see them in "regular life" and facing constant dramas while still in a frenetic, urban context— one in which you can visit where Jesus, literally, walked by day and then party, literally, all night.

The Israeli military has a very different culture than most other militaries: Women are both in combat and senior instructor roles, the culture is far less formal, commanders are much younger than their international counterparts, and parents feel entitled to come to the base and check in directly with any issues.

Israel/Palestine has the most international pre-existing branding of any current foreign conflict and perhaps the greatest polarization factor as well. To wit: 9 out of 10 Americans support one side or the other and close to $\frac{2}{3}$ of Americans say it is a top 5

issue for the United States. The Guardian says the conflict “comes under closer scrutiny than any other topic.” HBO is in production on a scripted series set in the West Bank and involving the Israeli army-- and our version is real.

People are interested. And yet, this story has never been told.

We have never seen an in-depth, on-the-ground, first person view-- In English, from our fellow citizens-- that exposes the daily rushes of adrenaline, impossible decisions, teamwork, and very strange alliances encountered by these college-age volunteer soldiers who would otherwise be doing keg stands and studying for finals.

The larger political conflict quickly fades into the background as viewers are confronted with the concrete, daily acute moral dilemmas and realities facing local Palestinians, Israelis, and soldiers, who are, ultimately, just people trying to live their lives under extraordinary circumstances.

And though Israel smacks of the United States when it comes to culture, lifestyle, and widespread English, it is very much not America. It's like being in an alternate universe. You have to retrain your instincts to succeed, and survive, even as everything seems similar to home. And these volunteers must figure out how to navigate both daily life and military life in this amped up environment, one which is starkly different from the simplistic depictions they have been told, by their parents, the media, teachers, and their friends.

4. Style and Locations

During the time on base, ENLISTED: WEST BANK will showcase themes and elements, like camaraderie, black humor, tension, and lethal ambiguity akin to “Restrepo” and “Battle for Marjah,” and with the universal young adult conflicts, romances, and day to day dramas of “The Real World.”

The setting for our combat soldiers is the most volatile and contentious city in the disputed West Bank- Hebron.

A divided city, Hebron is the traditional burial place of the biblical patriarchs and matriarchs is rife with hatred and violence, and not just along the usual demographic lines.

Imagine that scene in a Western, the one just before the big shootout, when the tension is palpable and the streets seem emptier than they should be... that's Hebron.

Faced with a high tempo of dangerous missions, the soldiers will be forced to trust one another with their lives, see past any superficial differences among themselves, and carry out difficult orders.

They will also meet and build surprising relationships with Palestinians, young and old, who will challenge and complicate their views on the conflict.

This would be enough to handle for anyone. Yet, the Israeli army operates on its own borders, not around the world. And so soldiers get to leave the base. Often.

When the soldiers are off base in Tel Aviv, a modern, European-style party capital on the Mediterranean Sea, the show will assume a marked change of tone as our cast tries to find love (or at least hook ups) relaxes, surfs, navigates existential crisis-inducing bureaucracy and tries to make their way in this new world.

This exceptional duality (or, if you like, schizophrenia) between Hebron and Tel Aviv reflects the bizarre nature of life for our cast in the Holy Land today: biblical feuds by day and EDM clubs by night; making friends with a Palestinian in Hebron and enemies with your apartment neighbor; it's bars that don't close and borders that don't open.

5. Who are these kids?

Why would any young man or woman choose to leave their comfy, laid-back life in America so they can fight for another country in a war 9,000 miles away, and which is not theirs to fight?

How does a kid whose closest brush with war was in a video game, who doesn't speak the language, and who was playing high school football a few months ago, learn to adapt and survive in a place where even the locals don't know what the hell is going on half the time?

International volunteers in the Israeli army (called "Lone Soldiers) number about 3,500 and come from more than 70 countries. Our potential cast members are a diverse group, White, Black, Latino, and Asian, and come from all parts of the U.S. and U.K.

There are roughly 5 archetypes:

- *screwed up in their life in the U.S. and want a fresh start
- *zealot or ideologically-driven
- *escaping family/society pressures and expectations
- *religious
- *unsure of what to do after high school or college and this seemed like fun.

Some of the specialities these soldiers have include riflemen, medic, explosives, grenadier, and cameraman.

As the season progresses, we will learn more about the volunteers, both why they truly joined and how they react to devilishly hard situations, which are ever-present in this beautiful mess of setting.

Casting Tapes and Bios can be accessed on the show's development site:

noahble.com/ewb

password for the site & videos: yalla77

6. Arc of the Show

We are planning to shoot in both the U.S and Israel. Principal photography in the U.S. will include the cohort of people about go to Israel and enlist (cohort B). It will also cover the group of soldiers on active duty in Israel (cohort A) coming back for a visit.

In Israel, we will get Cohort A during their tour in Hebron and during weekends in Tel Aviv. Once Cohort B arrives, we will cover their early days in the army.

Cohort A has been in the military for about a year at this point, and so they feel (felt) confident with their adopted culture and military life. But Hebron will change that.

As soldiers, they are lightning rods for trouble: from Israeli settlers, Palestinians, activists, journalists, and even tourists.

Under the glare of the international media, our cast will have to make life and death decisions while on night raids, patrols, firefights, manning checkpoints, and other missions, all of which occur under the most unclear of circumstances.

How will this change them? Will they end up fitting in? And will they ever be able to reconnect with life back in America after having such an experience?

Cohort B's journey will elucidate their expectations, many of which will be contradicted by what we see of Cohort A. Cohort B will also let us in on the early days of the shift from citizen to soldier and from American to would-be Israeli.

By watching both cohorts, we will get to see past the canned stories we have all heard about this part of the world and be introduced to sympathetic, engaging individuals on both sides of this intimate conflict.

ENLISTED is a series about young Americans who are on a journey to find out who they really are, in probably the harshest way possible, while gaining a sense of the validation and connectedness which has eluded them. They will be pushed to their absolute limits in every regard, in the war zone and in the city, while testing deeply-held beliefs about themselves, their friends and comrades, and the conflict itself.

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