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Dear Mr. Spielberg,

My intention in writing you are two fold; in hopes that this screenplay actually becomes a movie and even if that does not occur, then introducing you to the story of the "Burnt House" if you have not been exposed to it already fulfills my personal intent. I genuinely believe that if this screenplay is to become a movie, that you are the producer and director to make it, based on your intimate portrayal of survivors of the holocaust in Schindler's List.

This screenplay is borne out of years of my personal interest in the history of Israel, and the struggles of its people for survival in both the ancient and modern world. In 1998 I made my first trip to Israel on an archaeological tour led by Dr. Leen Ritmeyer who's expertise as an archaeologist centers on the Temple Mount and the Jewish Quarter. Recently, my non-profit, The Lamb Foundation, helped fund the published culmination of Leen's life work on the excavation and history of the Temple Mount.

While traveling with Dr. Ritmeyer, we visited a museum and archaeological site in the Jewish Quarter known as "The Burnt House." One of the sites most significant remains is the forearm and hand of a young woman, which was found among the ashes and rubble of what is believed to be her own home. I was deeply moved by this profoundly personal archaeological evidence, which testifies to the Roman Destruction of Jerusalem. Excavators also found a stone weight on site with the inscription, "Bar Kathros." Remarkably, Bar Kathros is specifically mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud as the name of a priestly family. A short film at the Burnt House Museum gives an account and possible reenactment of the events of 70 AD. I knew then that there was a story to be told.

I have returned to Jerusalem many times and each time I stepped back into the Jewish Quarter and onto the Temple Mount, my resolve to tell this story was renewed. This past year I hired two writers, giving them the basic outline of what I wanted and letting them create the screenplay "The Burnt House." It is the story of the skeleton remains of a young girl named "Rachel" and unfolds against the backdrop of the destruction of Jerusalem, the Temple and the majority of the Jewish population.

Some major themes include the life of Rachel in the house of the ruling priestly family, the priestly affluent class out of touch with the common people, the Zealots and their ideological thirst, and both the Flavian Dynasty and Roman military insensitivity. Among the Roman militia, we come to know a Roman soldier motivated by love for Rachel. The story of the survival of a people, one individual at a time, resonates throughout. A nation divided and filled with internal strife and conflict, yet they overcome!

This film is not a safe film; it may disturb a lot of people. It makes no one comfortable! This story is not about the Jewish struggle alone, but speaks to all of us. This film is not a Schindler's List, but has elements of it; it is not an Indiana Jones, but has elements of it; it is not a Gladiator, but has elements of it; it is not a Shakespeare in Love, but has elements of it as well.



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This story affords the rare opportunity to reconstruct the Temple in all of its magnificent glory, like no modern eyes have ever seen. This means reconstructing the center of Jewish faith and worship for 3,000 years since the time of Solomon. Resurrecting what Herod the Great called the greatest of all his architectural achievements. Josephus said that when the rays of the sun hit the Temple's eastern wall, because it was pure gold 172 ft. high and 100 ft. wide, a glow was cast throughout the entire city of Jerusalem. The most renowned architectural feat of the Roman Empire, the Coliseum, is breathtaking as displayed in the film Gladiator; and yet, even the Coliseum, in all of its greatness, was financed by the gold taken from the Temple in Jerusalem. But the real story of the Burnt House are the individuals personally who lost this glorious Temple and their lives at the same time.

Mr. Spielberg this is an important story that has never been told and the world needs to hear it !!

We may never meet but I want to thank you for the opportunity you have provided Rachel in reading this script of "the Burnt House". I would like to extend an invitation to have you and your family visit the Museum of Archaeology and Biblical History here in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Over the past fifteen years we have acquired many wonderful, timeless artifacts, including coins (Silver Shekels) minted in Jerusalem from the time of the destruction of the Temple. Our collection is one of the finest found anywhere in the world outside of the land of Israel.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

John E. Mancini  
Founder  
The Lamb Foundation

Enclosures:

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