

## Tzedek's Purim Spiel Setting the Scene...

In June 2009, investigative journalists from TzedekTV uncovered international trade practices that led to the death and suffering of thousands of people in the South American country of Diego.

It was found that trade practices of two multi-national companies, Haman Enterprises and A. Cash Industries, either directly or indirectly led to the deaths and suffering of thousands of cotton farmers as well as workers in the Diego garment trade. Esther Benitez, an employee of A. Cash Industries, first blew the whistle on these practices. Her uncle Mordecai Scolari also played a vital role in saving hundreds of lives and forcing A. Cash Industries to change their trade practices. Fair Trade campaigner Juan Hatacho played an important role keeping Esther updated on the latest developments.

The CEO of Haman Enterprises has been arrested for his role in the scandal and his company has now been declared bankrupt. The Prime Minister of Diego has been criticised for not acting against Haman Enterprises and has had to resign. The A. Cash legal team successfully proved that their CEO was in fact misled by Haman enterprises, enabling the company to continue trading. Ms Benitez and Mr Scolari have both been given positions on the board of A. Cash. Ms Benitez has denied that her story is to be made into a Hollywood movie.

**Characters:** (in order of appearance)

1. TzedekTV Investigative journalist(s)
2. Haman III, CEO of Haman Enterprises
3. A. Cashverosh, CEO of A Cash Industries
4. Esther Benitez, employee of A Cash.
5. Mordecai Scolari, uncle of Esther.
6. Juan Hatacho, Fairtrade campaigner and friends of Mordecai
7. Diego cotton farmer(s)
8. Diego garment worker(s).
9. Felipe Ramos, Prime Minister of Diego
10. The A Cash Legal Team

## Scenes 1 & 2

### Characters:

- Introduction: 1 or more characters: **TzedekTV journalist(s)**
- Scene 1: Two characters: **Haman III and Mr. Cashverosh.**
- Scene 2: Three (or more) characters: **TzedekTV journalist, farmer(s) and worker(s)**

**Introduction:** TzedekTV Journalist(s) sets the scene.

- *Use your character card and the information below as a basis to introduce the documentary.*

### TzedekTV Journalist(s):

“You might have seen the footage of Haman III being led away by police earlier this evening. The man who could ‘do no wrong’ in business, topping the Times Rich List the past 3 years and known for his charitable donations to the poor has now been unmasked as the face behind what has become known as the Diego scandal. Bringing you the story behind the headlines, TzedekTV investigates.

Four years ago, Haman Enterprises was a relatively small and unknown company. Its rise to power was helped by a merger with A Cash Industries, one of the biggest listed companies. Here is some footage from that merger:”

**Scene 1: Footage from the merger between Haman Enterprises and A Cash Industries**

**Characters:** Haman III and A. Cashverosh

- *Look at your character profile cards for ideas about your characters.*
- *Decide how you would act out a dialogue which took place between Haman III and A. Cashverosh including the information below:*

### Scene Synopsis

Haman III has a business deal that is guaranteed to make billions of dollars but his company is too small and needs to work with A Cash Industries. Mr.

Cashverosh is at first not keen. He can see that the plans involve dangerous working conditions for Diego factory workers as well as the possible use of child labour. The price paid to farmers for their cotton also seems to be very low and he worries about whether this is legal. However, he gets a call from his legal team that the conditions are legal in terms of International Trade Law and as Haman III knows that the prime minister of Diego is desperate to increase trade and willing to make some compromises, he decides to go ahead. They shake hands on the deal.

**Scene 2: An interview between TzedekTV Journalist(s), the farmer(s) and the worker(s)**

**Characters: TzedekTV Journalist(s), Farmer(s) and Worker(s)**

- *Look at your character profile cards for ideas about your characters.*
- *Decide how you would act out an interview between the journalist(s) and the farmer(s) and worker(s) using the information below:*

**Introduction: TzedekTV Journalist(s):**

“As we now know, that agreement had some far-reaching consequences for the farmers and garment workers of Diego. Our reporter learnt the following from them.”

*First part of the interview is between farmer(s) and TzedekTV Journalist(s)*

**Background information for the farmer(s) interview**

1. Two years ago farmers were told by the government they could only sell their cotton to A Cash/Haman, who would give them a good price.
2. A Cash/Haman never paid on time and kept lowering the price before they would pay, blaming global conditions.
3. Farmers had to borrow money from A Cash while waiting for payment and the high interest on these loans forced farmers to sell their farms to A Cash plantations. Previously well-off farmers now have no income and merely grow food for themselves. They have no money to buy medicines or to send their children to school.
4. Instead of buying cotton from farmers, factories had to buy it from A Cash/Haman who increased the price.

*Second party of interview is between factory worker(s) and TzedekTV Journalist(s)*

**Background information for the worker(s) interview**

5. A Cash/Haman ordered very large numbers of clothes and didn't give factory workers enough time to make them. If the factories were late in delivering the clothes, they were fined.
6. Desperate factories hired child workers or forced workers to work very long hours for very little pay.
7. A Cash/Haman bought up factories which had unsafe working conditions. When hundreds of workers died after being trapped in a factory fire, investigators started to look at the A Cash/ Haman business practices more closely and it all started to come out.

## Scenes 3 & 4

### Characters:

In between scenes: 1 character: **TzedekTV journalist**

Scene 3: two characters: **Esther and Mordecai**

Scene 4: two characters: **Esther and Juan Hatacho**

*TzedekTV Journalist introduces the second part of the documentary.*

- *Use the information below and think about how the journalist would introduce it.*

### Introduction: TzedekTV Journalist:

“Their names have become famous by now, but how did it all start for Esther Benitez and her uncle Mordecai Scolari? Watch the following clip.”

### Scene 3: Telephone Conversation between Esther and Mordecai

Characters: **Esther and Mordecai**

- *Look at your character profile cards for ideas about your character.*
- *Decide how you would act out the conversation between Esther and Mordecai including the following information:*

### Scene Synopsis

*This is a phone conversation between Esther and her uncle.*

Esther has just landed a position in marketing at A Cash Industries working specifically with the Haman Enterprises fashion group. She is very excited about the opportunity - she loves fashion and she has heard that the people of Diego will benefit from the deal. Esther wants to go far in fashion and does not want to hear anything negative about this company

Mordecai warns her that Haman III does not like South Americans and that she must be careful not to let on that she is from Diego. He has heard that the company is ruthless and just out to make a lots of money with no concern for people. He is not happy that Esther is working for them and he is worried about her.

### **TzedekTV Journalist:**

“That conversation took place 2 years ago. Today Esther Benitez is one of the key witnesses testifying against Haman Enterprises - how did that change come about?”

**Scene 4: A Fair-trade Activist comes to talk to Esther and Juan Hatacho**  
**Characters: Esther and Juan Hatacho**

- *Look at your character profile cards for ideas about your characters.*
- *Decide how you would act out a conversation including the following information:*

### **Scene Synopsis**

Esther has now been working for A Cash/Haman for a year. There are some things that worry her about the way they do business but at the same time she does not want to lose her job. Mordecai has sent Juan, a fair-trade activist, to speak to her about the terrible things that are happening in Diego and to tell her that she must act urgently before more people die and suffer.

Juan tells her: Farmers are not given the agreed price, they are paid late and forced to get into debt, losing their farms and barely able to feed their families. Workers are forced to work very long shifts and punished for not making their quotas (i.e. not being able to make the clothes that have been ordered by A Cash/Haman on time). Working conditions are unsafe and a recent fire trapped and killed hundreds of workers.

Esther is at first reluctant, then she realizes that she has to do something but she is worried that as a mere employee she can't just march into the boardroom. She asks Juan to organise a big strike and to get the media on her side so that she can show Mr. Cashverosh the extent of the malpractices.

### **TzedekTV Journalist**

Let us go next to that moment when Esther marched into the boardroom to confront Haman III and A. Cashverosh and their legal team.

## Scenes 5 & 6

### Characters:

Scene 5: four or more characters: Esther, A. Cashverosh, Haman and the legal team

Scene 6: two characters: TzedekTV journalist, Felipe Ramos

**Scene 5:** Esther is appalled by the news that workers for the company are being mistreated - she is trying to find the courage to talk to her bosses about it.

**Characters:** Esther, A. Cashverosh, Haman and the legal team

- *Look at your character profile cards for ideas about your characters.*
- *Decide how you would act out the role plays outlined below.*

### Scene Synopsis

Esther has just heard that A Cash/Haman, the company that she works for, mistreats factory workers and farmers. Farmers who normally supply cotton to clothes-making factories are now being forced into debt.

Esther tries to get her courage to go into the boardroom. When she gets in, A. Cashverosh has been looking at a very successful promotion she did for the company and he congratulates her and asks her what she wants. She can't bring herself to say anything about the problems and instead invites Haman III, A. Cahsverosh and the lawyers to a VIP pre-launch party the following day. They all accept, flattered to be invited.

At the party (where Mordecai also making an appearance) A. Cashverosh tells Esther she looks fantastic and that the party is a great success. He has been looking at her achievements for the company and wants to promote her. Esther is looking sad.

A. Cashverosh wants to know what is wrong.

Esther asks him to switch on the plasma screen. (Mordecai tells about the riots, protests and strikes in Diego and the fact that the people want a fair deal.)

A. Cashverosh wants to know what the riots are.

Esther tells him that someone is trying to destroy her people by treating them unfairly, harming them and their families. She only wants justice for them.

A. Cashverosh wants to know who is guilty.

Esther points to Haman, who is very busy talking to the lawyers.

A. Cashverosh tells Haman to leave and calls security to detain him.

The lawyers very quickly show that A. Cashverosh knew nothing about the unfair practices and that it had all been Haman III's fault. A. Cashverosh asks Esther and Mordecai to become members of his board to make sure that this kind of thing does not happen again.

### **Scene 6: Interview with Felipe Ramos**

**Characters: TzedekTV Journalist and Felipe Ramos**

- *Think about how you would act out this scene based around an interview between the TzedekTV Journalist and Prime Minister of Diego Felipe Ramos*
- *Using the following information as well as the character profile cards:*

#### **Introduction: TzedekTV Journalist**

"In a further development today, Felipe Ramos, who had only been Prime Minister of Diego for a year, has been sacked today. It has emerged that Mr Ramos changed some laws which allowed Haman Enterprises to do a lot of damage to the country's economy and people."

#### **Background information for Ramos Interview**

Ramos wanted to improve the economy by increasing trade. He was told by Haman II that this deal would bring more trade and money for everyone. He decided to change the laws only because he thought it would help the country (he claims). He did not think it would lead to such a terrible situation (he claims).

He also claims that Haman never gave him any payment and that he has not personally benefitted from the deal."

#### **Conclusion; TzedekTV Journalist**

"To what extent did A. Cashverosh know what was going on?

Did Prime Minister Ramos benefit from the dealings?

Will the new trade agreements with Diego last and actually improve people's lives once the media attention goes away?

Will Esther become a role-model for young women around the world and be asked to appear on celebrity reality TV shows?

All these questions remain unanswered tonight.

Go to our website at [Tzedek.org.uk](http://Tzedek.org.uk) to express your views and contribute to the fairtrade conversation. "Goodnight."