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I knew Yitzhak Rabin, though not very well. He was a painfully bashful person who tended to keep his distance, and he was IDF chief of staff when in the 1960s I, a first lieutenant in General Staff Intelligence, would run into him in the washroom and he would seem more awkward about the encounter than me. Later in life, I knew him well enough to call him Yitzhak.

I keep a photo on the wall of my study from 1989 in which he, then minister of defense, and Major General (res) Aharon Yariv and I are discussing a major research project I had coordinated at the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies on Israel's options for a Palestinian settlement. In his very special manner of thinking and especially of speaking—slow, deep voice—Rabin quite typically asked us just one question: “What was your methodology?”

The night he was assassinated, I didn't sleep. Early the next morning, I drove to Jerusalem where at the time I was representing a major American Jewish advocacy organization (not APN). In my head I was running through the work ahead of me coordinating the arrival of the organization's president for the funeral. At the red light at the entrance to the city, inching through the morning traffic jam, I noticed that someone had already hung a poster, “In his death he willed us peace.” In the car stopped next to me, the driver was sobbing.

As I walked into my office I saw a teenage girl from the nearby Haredi community sitting on the low stone wall outside the building. She was crying. I asked if I could help her and she shook her head.

Later that morning a TV crew from one of the major American networks came to interview me regarding, what else?, the strategic ramifications of the assassination. Half way through the interview I dissolved in tears.

Less than a month later I reconvened a very unique, and secret, group of settler leaders and Arafat lieutenants whom I had managed to convince to talk to one another. For over a year, Rabin had received my reports of these meetings between Israel's messianic extremists and our problematic Palestinian peace partners. Now, during two days of talks neither side even bothered to mention Rabin's murder. . .

My heart ached. Two months later I underwent quadruple bypass surgery. I know, I know, a few months is not nearly long enough for the stress of a trauma to clog your arteries.