Haman, the genius megalomanic

The villain of the story of Purim is Haman ben Hamedata, a descendant of Amaleq. King Aḥashverosh appointed Haman as his Vizier (or Chief of Staff). The King also issued an unusual order (Esther 3:2) all the officers of the Kings's court must bow-down to Haman. Everyone followed the King's order except one man: Mordekhay (tomorrow, BH, we will discuss *why*) . When Haman learned about Mordekhay's affront, "he disdained to lay hands on Mordekhay alone" (3:6), and anticipating the practices of the mafia, he decided instead to kill all of Mordekhay's brothers and sisters: the entire Jewish nation. As we have explained, the Persian empire covered all the civilized world, so every single Jew in the planet was a target of Haman's decree. Including more than 50,000 Jews that were living by that time in Israel.

How would Haman execute his pan? To persuade the King was very easy. Among other things, because there were zero operating costs involved. On the contrary: in exchange for his executive order Haman offered the King a lot of money for the Royal treasure (3:9). Now, how would Haman recruit so many soldiers and forces to find and execute hundreds of thousands of Jews?

Haman came up with a shrewd evil plan, which the Megila briefly describes with two words: *ushlalam la-boz*. A Royal Decree was sent saying: "If you kill a Jew on a certain day (Adar 13), you are not to be prosecuted. The police will not oppose you. Moreover: you can keep the Jew's money, his assets and his properties". It was a genius plan! There was no need for professional army forces, trains to transport the Jews to death camps or gas chambers. Our Rabbis explained that there was no shortage of volunteers. Many people, particularly those who were not sympathetic to the Jews, were fighting among themselves to be the first to kill the Jews and keep their money!

Had Haman succeeded (and he was very close!) it would have been the end of the Jewish people!

At the end, as we all know, Mordekhay and Esther devised an effective plan, and HaShem, from behind the scenes, saved us from extinction.

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by Rabbi Benjamin Blech