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Australian Story: When Plans Change – Part 2 (Sally Faulkner)

An EXCLUSIVE two-part special, Part 2 airs Monday October 24 at 8pm on ABC & iview

This compelling final episode of Sally Faulkner's story reveals what went wrong in the 60 Minutes child abduction fiasco

The plan to “snatch” Sally Faulkner’s children from the streets of Beirut seemed always destined to fail.

And locals say it could have ended tragically for Sally and her children.

Dr Sami Nader, director of the Levant Institute for Strategic Affairs in Beirut, has told *Australian Story* the plan was fundamentally flawed because the area where the children were taken was tightly controlled by Hezbollah.

“I was very surprised the abductors took the risk to get into this area,” he says. “This was insane. You are putting the kids in a very dangerous situation.”

Part 2 of *When Plans Change* looks at what went wrong on the ground in Beirut and hears from key players including Khaled Barbour, the Lebanese driver of the abduction car, and Yasmine Hamza, the woman who sheltered Sally Faulkner and her children in her apartment (the “safe house”), as well as Lebanese police.

“We didn’t know what to do,” Yasmine Hamza says. “I can’t throw a woman with her kids out onto the street. Our hands were tied.”

Sally Faulkner details the harrowing account of trying to retrieve her children and what happened in the 24 hours between the abduction and her arrest, her time in a Lebanese jail and her heartbreaking farewell to her children.

“I was beside myself, I can’t even describe to you how beside myself I was,” she says. “I felt I couldn’t breathe at some points, just at the thought of having to give my children back.”

The Brisbane mother made headlines earlier this year when she was jailed in Beirut, along with a 60 Minutes crew and a child recovery team.

What began as a custody battle had now turned into an international incident.

Ten months earlier, Sally Faulkner’s estranged husband Ali Elamine had asked to take their two children, then five-year-old Lahela and two-year-old Noah, to Lebanon for a holiday. He later called Sally to say the children would not be coming back to Australia.

Sally Faulkner, who now lives back in Brisbane, is facing kidnap charges in Beirut which carry a potential penalty of between three and seven years.

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