

The Myth of Martyrdom: What Really Drives Suicide Bombers, Rampage Shooters, and Other Self-Destructive Killers

Adam Lankford



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For decades, experts have told us that suicide bombers are the psychological equivalent of America's Navy SEALs--men and women so fully committed to their cause or faith that they cease to fear death. In *The Myth of Martyrdom*, Adam Lankford corrects this misconception, arguing that terrorists are driven to suicide for the same reasons any civilian might be: depression, anxiety, marital strife, or professional failure. He takes readers on a journey through the minds of suicide bombers, airplane hijackers, 'lone wolf' terrorists, and rampage shooters, via their suicide notes, love letters, diary entries, and martyrdom videos. The result is an astonishing account of rage and shame that will transform the way we think of terrorism forever. Lankford convincingly demonstrates that only by understanding the psychological crises that precipitate these acts can we ever hope to stop them.

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