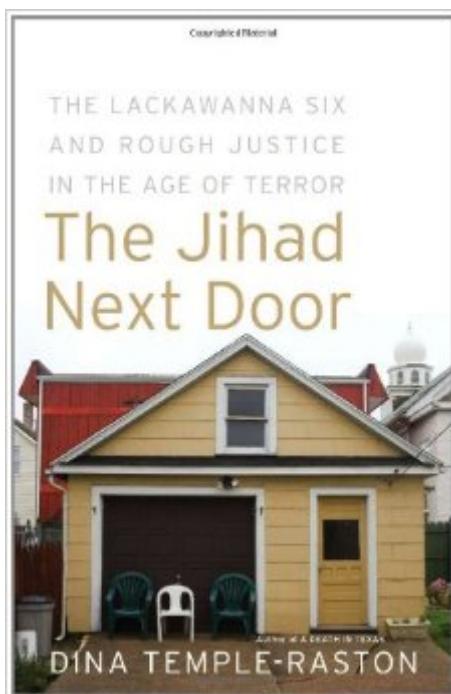


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The Jihad Next Door: The Lackawanna Six And Rough Justice In An Age Of Terror



Synopsis

They called themselves the Arabian Knights. They were six Yemeni-American friends, a gang of high-school soccer stars, a band of brothers on the grim side streets of Lackawanna's First Ward, just a stone's throw from Buffalo. Later, people would argue about why they left western New York in the spring of 2001 to attend an al-Qaeda camp. Some said they traveled to Afghanistan to become America's first sleeper cell; terrorists slumbering while they awaited orders from on high. Others said that their ill-fated trip was a lark, an adventurous extension of their youthful wrestling with what it meant to be Muslim in America. Dina Temple-Raston returns to Lackawanna to tell the story of a group of young men; born and brought up in small town America; who left otherwise unremarkable lives to attend an al-Qaeda camp. Though they sought to quietly slip back into their roles as middle class Americans, the 9/11 attacks made that impossible. The Jihad Next Door is the story of pre-emptive justice in the age of terror. It follows a handful of ordinary men through an extraordinary time when Muslims in America are often instantly suspect, their actions often viewed through the most sinister lens.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

My overall evaluation of this book is stated in the title of this review. The author doesn't develop one theme throughout this book, but jumps around between several different themes. Worse, some of these themes have merit and some don't. Some examples:Theme 1: The Yemenite community in Lackawanna was typical of an ethnic/immigrant community anywhere in America in the past 100 years until this incident and its fallout. - One wishes this were true, but apparently it isn't, and

Temple-Raston herself can't help but note things like this community's general celebration of the attack on the U.S. Cole (p.30), their insularity, the susceptibility of their youth to religious radicals, and their celebration of the escape of one of the "6" [really 9] from Yemenite authorities. Comparing this with the "illegal" Mexican-American community where I live, I don't see any similarity at all. My Mexican-American neighbors are rabidly pro-American [curiously, even when being chased by Homeland Security] and would like nothing better than for the U.S. model to be emulated everywhere. Theme 2: The 6 [or 9] were just young alienated youth who really weren't at all interested in terrorism, but just wanted "to belong" and reaffirm their ethnic identity. They were misled into going to the Al Queda camps under the guise that they would be training to fight Russians and Serbs, not Americans. It was "an adventure" for the 9, not a serious taking up of arms. - The author adduces some evidence for this theme, but then, again, notes facts like the Lackawanna youth who ended up staying in the Middle East clearly declared to his fellows that he wanted to be a martyr and die for the cause. [One wonders why things were so clear to this young man but purportedly weren't at all clear to the other 8.

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