

## **Who Killed Daniel Pearl?**

Bernard-Henri Levy

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Seeking the truth embodied in the cadaver of the crime itself, Bernard-Henri Levy has scrupulously developed a superb and on-site forensic profile of the events, the actors, and the intrigues in the fateful five-days, in January 2002, encompassing the kidnapping, torture, and decapitation of the American journalist, Daniel Pearl. "What had Danny discovered, or what was he in the process of discovering, that condemned him to death?"

Levy, author of thirty books, and one of France's most celebrated intellectuals, admits that some of this profile is calculated fiction, but adamantly, the heart and soul of the work is carefully complemented with keen investigative journalism and embedded in a vivid and compelling reconstitution of the deadly maze uniting the perpetrator(s) and the victim. This book is a marvel of esoteric knowledge of the inner workings of terror groups, especially the ones operating in Pakistan.

London born, Omar Sheikh, "is the front figure in a crime syndicate united around Pearl's body in life, and then his cadaver in death...a matchless alignment for a murder that is decidedly one of a kind" involving the arcane militant sect Al Fuqrah, the Muslims of America, the other International Quranic Open University operating under the absolute control of the fundamentalist and radical emir, Pir Murbarak Shah Gilani, Daniel Pearl's last known contact, his last appointment before the kidnapping.

"This crime was not petty, a murder for nothing, an uncontrolled act of fundamentalist fanatics: it's a crime of state, intended and authorized, whether we like it or not, by the state of Pakistan. And that is the fact that we must accept: Daniel Pearl was tortured and murdered in a house belonging to a fake charity organization that serves as a mask for Ormar bin Laden....The paradox, of course, is that it implicates a country, which is a full-fledge member of the antiterrorist coalition." (p273)

The unsaid in this dark diplomacy of death is profoundly highlighted by recent events (January 2004): Pakistan's President Musharraf narrowly escaping spiraling assassination attempts; and, the arrest of several Pakistani nuclear scientists involved in the illicit marketing of weapons of mass destruction.

Levy's illation of these facts indicates a wider curve to the Daniel Pearl murder encompassing terrorist organizations in New York City and the heartland of the United States, as well as an astounding link to the sniper, John Allen Williams aka John Mohammad, that terrorized the Washington, D.C. area in 2002. A convert, who left, the Nation of Islam, John Mohammad assumed the life of a desperado of unbridled hate and nefarious connections of whom the FBI suspect had recruited him in joining not only Al-Fuqrah, but also the Muslims of America.

"Was Daniel Pearl investigating the American branches of al-Qaida? Is the key to the mystery of his death also in the closets on the hard disks of the intelligence agencies of Washington? We're still waiting for a clear and public admission, by those responsible, of this extraordinary historical error in which the leaders of the free world welcomed to their breast and sometimes generated the Golem that we must now drive out from one end of the planet to the other. Perhaps that is what Daniel

Pearl was waiting for-perhaps that's what he wanted to provoke." (p431)

Levy's hypothesis is that Pearl was writing an article exposing Pakistan's duplicitous game, whereby it posed on one hand as a good ally of the United States, and on the other leading itself, through its most prestigious scientists, to the most fearsome operations of nuclear proliferation. He asserts that the situation taking form between Islamabad and Karachi "is a black hole compared to which Saddam Hussein's Baghdad was an obsolete weapons dump." Levy poses the question: "Is terrorism the bastard child of a demonic couple: Islam and Europe?" The reader may well pose another: "Is the United States becoming the foster parent of terrorism as well?"

At times, Levy's intricate circumlocution and maze of trails smacks a bit more of the CIA's Atherton (who eventually became paranoid) than of straightforward research; still, I agree that "just because you're paranoid, doesn't mean that they're not after you!" Bernard-Henri Levy's project of recreating a trail to and from the "death hut" sequestered in a walled courtyard in the environs of Karachi will elucidate this crime for years to come. It is a decent and incredible tribute to a brave journalist and a troubling legacy for all of us to share.

This book is a vital and compelling journey into the bowels of the rogue state, the terrorist corpus delecti. It offers the reader a rare opportunity to reach beyond contemporary political and cultural polemics, the prattle of pundits and the distilled rage of religious fundamentalists. It is a solid and necessary read for scholars of terrorism, security policy experts, press, politicians, and the public in seeking to understand the fabric of uncertainty encompassing our times.

Jess Maghan  
Chester, Connecticut  
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