



# Terrorists in Love: The Real Lives of Islamic Radicals

*Ken Ballen*

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## **Terrorists in Love: The Real Lives of Islamic Radicals** Ken Ballen

Imagine a world where a boy's dreams dictate the behavior of warriors in battle; where a young couple's only release from forbidden love is death; where religious extremism, blind hatred, and endemic corruption combine to form a lethal ideology that can hijack a man's life forever. This is the world of *Terrorists in Love*.

A former federal prosecutor and congressional investigator, Ken Ballen spent five years as a pollster and a researcher with rare access—via local government officials, journalists, and clerics—interviewing more than a hundred Islamic radicals, asking them searching questions about their inner lives, deepest faith, and what it was that ultimately drove them to jihad. Intimate and enlightening, *Terrorists in Love* opens a fresh window into the realm of violent extremism as Ballen profiles six of these men—from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia—revealing a universe of militancy so strange that it seems suffused with magical realism.

Mystical dreams and visions, the demonic figure of the United States, intense sexual repression, crumbling family and tribal structures—the story that emerges here is both shocking and breathtakingly complex. *Terrorists in Love* introduces us to men like Ahmad Al-Shayea, an Al Qaeda suicide bomber who survives his attack only to become fiercely pro-American; Zeddy, who trains terrorists while being paid by America's ally, the Pakistani Army; and Malik, Taliban leader Mullah Omar's personal seer. Lifting the veil on the mysterious world of Muslim holy warriors, Ballen probes these men's deepest secrets, revealing the motivations behind their deadly missions and delivering a startling new exploration of what drives them to violence and why there is yet an unexpected hope for peace. An extraordinarily gifted listener and storyteller, Ballen takes us where no one has dared to go—deep into the secret heart of Islamic fundamentalism, providing a glimpse at the lives, loves, frustrations, and methods of those whose mission it is to destroy us.

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