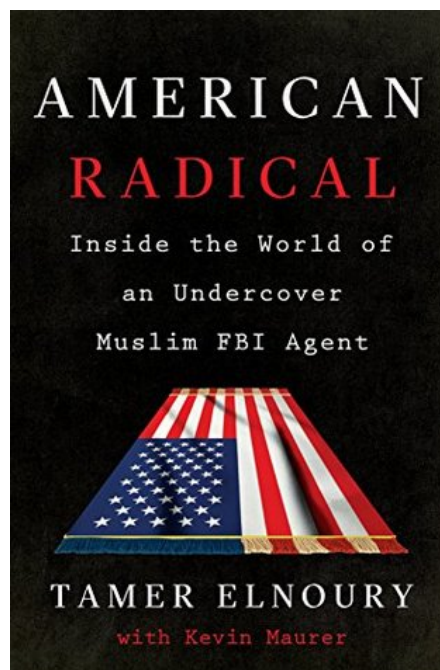




American Radical: Inside the World of an Undercover Muslim FBI Agent

Tamer Elnoury , Kevin Maurer

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The explosive memoir of a Muslim American FBI agent fighting terror from the inside.

It's no secret that federal agencies are waging a broad, global war against terror. But for the first time in this memoir, an active Muslim American federal agent reveals his experience infiltrating and bringing down a terror cell in North America.

A longtime undercover agent, Tamer Elnoury joined an elite counterterrorism unit after September 11. Its express purpose is to gain the trust of terrorists whose goals are to take out as many Americans in as public and as devastating a way possible. It's a furious race against the clock for Tamer and his unit to stop them before they can implement their plans. Yet as new as this war still is, the techniques are as old as time: listen, record, and prove terrorist intent.

Due to his ongoing work for the FBI, Elnoury writes under a pseudonym. An Arabic-speaking Muslim American, a patriot, a hero: To many Americans, it will be a revelation that he and his team even exist, let alone the vital and dangerous work they do keeping all Americans safe.

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From Reader Review American Radical: Inside the World of an Undercover Muslim FBI Agent for online ebook

James Rindfuss says

I heard an interview with the author on a podcast a few months ago and the story sounded really interesting, so I was pretty excited to read this book. To be honest though, it was a big let down compared to my expectations for a few reasons. First off, it is very apparent that the author is a special agent and former cop, not a writer. It is not well written at all and some points he wants to make get repetitive.

I also came to question how effective a lot of their approach is in actually preventing terrorism. From my perspective reading his account, all of the people who end up arrested seem to be hot-heads who like to talk about jihad but would never have the human or financial resources to carry out an attack. Then the FBI comes in and offers them a financier and gives them all of these resources to plan an attack and help with recruiting others. Sure their ideology is deplorable and they most certainly should be closely monitored by the intelligence agencies, but in my reading I'm not so convinced they committed any crimes before the FBI came in and started helping facilitate things. It just seems like a waste of resources as they blow through so much money on this operation. I'd be curious to know whether they do this same type of work on white nationalists or others with insane ideologies. Or if intervening and trying to de-radicalize them would have any success. I could be totally wrong about all of this though, it was just the impression I got.

Finally, the author just comes off as a huge dick in a lot of his interactions with his colleagues, superiors and the Canadian authorities.

There were some positives to the book though. The story itself is pretty compelling, especially learning about how some of the undercover work is done. And there were also interesting and informative tidbits about mainstream Islam and Muslim culture that I enjoyed learning about.

Nancy says

A Muslim American Fights for America

Elnoury's family immigrated to the US from Egypt when he was only four years old. He is a devout Muslim, but also a loyal American. From his early years, he wanted to be involved in police work and became an undercover agent in drug enforcement. From the stories early in the book, he must have been very good at it.

Then 911 came. The author couldn't believe his fellow Muslims would do this. He offered his services to the FBI, but at the time they were unable to take advantage of him. Years later, he met another FBI agent and this time, as a Muslim fluent in Arabic, they wanted to use him. He became Tamer Elnoury. The FBI created this individual and backstopped his identity. Under this cover, he brought down a terrorist network.

If you enjoy police procedurals and spy stories, you'll love this book. This is a real life thriller. The early chapters give insight into the undercover work in drug enforcement. The latter chapters are as exciting as a spy story, but they're real. The writing is good and the action is non-stop.

This is an important book. It's incontrovertible that Muslim radicals have done a great deal of harm in the world, but not all Muslims are radicals. The author is a devote Muslim who has risked his life to keep the rest of us safe. I recommend reading the epilogue. Elnoury makes a good case for why we should welcome

Muslims into the country. All religions have adherents who use the sacred books to substantiate their own beliefs. That doesn't equate to all members of a religious group being terrorists.

I highly recommend this book. It's an entertaining read and makes an important point for today's world.

I received this book from Dutton for this review.

Tony Taylor says

This is an autobiography about a Muslim FBI agent who came to the US as a child from Egypt with his parents. After graduating from college and spending 12 years as an undercover drug agent with the NY PPolice Department, he joined the FBI several years after 9/11 and became a very effective undercover agent ferreting out radical Muslims in the US and Canada. The author's name is a nom de guerre since he is still active as an FBI undercover agent fighting the war on terror.

Most of the book is told in the first person making it read as though it were a novel, but the facts have been documented in court verifying that this man may be one of our best defenses against terrorism in America. Highly recommend!

📚 Sam 📚 says

Wauw, this is really an interesting true story. This guy is a hero.

To all on Goodreads; Go and read this one!!

Michel B. says

I hesitated a fair bit before choosing to buy this book. In essence, I'm weary of the Islam-bashing that goes on both in Canada and the US and didn't want to contribute my \$\$ to a book that would just keep on promoting Islam and muslims in a poor light. As it turns out, this book did the opposite and I was glad for it.

The book is well written and the narrative flows exceptionally well. There are moments of humour and the story is wholly engrossing. An interesting story, well told.

Caveat: I'm certain that there may have been some untold aspects that could paint the 'authorities' in a lesser light - and those were not included. But I still found it interesting and not overly propagandist.

(very mild) spoiler alert:

Ps. One inconsistency truly bothered me and made me question the honesty of the narrative. The lease on the apartment of one of the terrorists was 'up' in December (or so) on his Montreal flat. Which is very very odd, since Montreal (and Quebec) is known for its odd custom of having the vast majority of leases due on July 1 - everybody (or almost) moves out at the same time here. Whilst it's common to have people move into a flat at different points in the year, the lease would most certainly have been made for the whatever remaining

months until July 1 came along again. Everybody knows this here and I found it a most peculiar part of the story and wondered what was the truth of it....

Salam

Roy says

Interesting read on this undercover agents life. I found it pretty thrilling in some aspects however, I felt like the style made it feel a little fiction like. When I've read non fiction most of the time whilst reading I feel the strain, the emotion of the characters/issues. However the fiction style story telling lost it for me. Not bad by any means, just wasn't what I was expecting.

Mehrsa says

This book was both less and more than what I expected it to be--or maybe just different. I thought it would paint a bigger picture of the various ways in which Muslims in law enforcement were helping in counter-terrorism. But it was just one man's story. It was more exciting and "action-packed" than I thought it would be. It belongs in the genre of tough cops getting bad guys rather than any sort of wider social commentary. But it's useful even as a single story because it shows how a devout muslim confronts a radical "twisted" muslim. It was a riveting read.

L.A. Starks says

Highly recommended for thriller readers, especially of the Alex Berenson series.

Elnoury is a pseudonym for an actual FBI agent who went undercover. Elnoury's work led to the capture and conviction of three Canadian radicals who were preparing to kill innocents in Canada and the US in the name of their radical politics and twisted interpretations of Islam.

Elnoury outlines the men and their attempts, and all it took for him not to be discovered, ending with important theological distinctions between the men's ideological excuses/rigid preference for violence.

He also notes one telling factor in indentifying the main subject, Chiheb, as radicalized was that he had STOPPED going to mosque because he hated the moderation of his fellow congregants.

The story told in this book is superb and suspenseful. It is also a welcome reminder of the men and women who put their lives on the line to keep the rest of us safe.

HFK says

During the Christmas time security commissioner Julian King noted that violent jihadists are one of the greatest threats in Europe. Europe has faced its fair share of radical and political terror during the years, but

this time the threat is global, and is targeted towards Western lifestyle, values and communities.

According to GTD between 2001 and 2017 Europe has faced 2 665 terror attacks, 614 of them after January 2015. Turkey has warned that a new ISIS-fighter group is arriving to Europe, Germany has recently been tackling through a female Islamist network, the amount of prevented terror attacks is in disheartening proportions - from lone wolves to military operative groups.

The amount of Islamic groups with potential to violence is astonishing around the globe. With the ever changing territories - radicalization does not care about the gender, it does not care about the age of the one it desires to catch, it does not care about your background and your values. It just simply takes and takes, more than it ever has in recent years.

There was a time when I genuinely wanted to talk about this subject on Goodreads. I really liked the idea of sharing the knowledge I have gained during the years, being privileged in that being able to communicate with so many experts and so many people with experience of the subject from different perspectives, being taught by them.

I especially liked to highlight the importance of prevention, the ability to be 10 minutes ahead of you instead of awaiting the shit hitting the fan and then cleaning up the mess. Unproductive and ineffective in all ways and some.

So, in the spirit of prevention, what would be a better book to start with than to read an account of an Counter-terrorism undercover Muslim FBI agent?

In order to defeat your enemy, you must first understand them.

Tamer Elnoury and his family moved to America from Egypt when he was still a young boy. He was fully educated in Islam, he was fluent in Arabic and had a desire for being a cop instead of fancier careers his family always rooted for him. FBI was ready to recruit him after his graduation, but he felt the need to see how he would manage a life as a cop, on the streets instead of at a safer desk job.

Elnoury spend ten years being an undercover cop pretending to be a drug dealer before landing a job in Counter-terrorism. Elnoury had offered his services to the FBI after 9/11, but it took years before he was accepted to a job that could be considered as one of the most dangerous there is.

It is to be noted that *American Radical: The Undercover Muslim FBI Agent Risking His Life To Save Yours* is approved by the FBI, which pretty much is a code for only getting what they think you need to get, and nothing more, but probably a lot less.

FBI clearly has a shortage of people who could do undercover in Counter-terrorism, a good background and knowledge is not enough, but it also requires the ability to operate in such surroundings where human lives are at stake. And the few that can do this job, are swamped with it. So was Elnoury, too.

This wasn't my first jihadi bitch fight.

LMAO aside, *American Radical* mainly focuses on Elnoury's operation in making friends with Chiheb

Esseghaier, an highly educated Tunisian Al-Qaeda member who plotted to derail or bomb a train between Toronto and New York City in 2013.

Elnoury and Chibeb came fast friends, and Chibeb grew to love Elnoury as his brother. During the operation, Elnoury had mixed feelings of Chibeb and he often wondered if he could save him from going to the wrong tracks.

I can fully understand that as even I felt bad for Chibeb at times knowing he was played on. But like Elnoury, I too got back to the reality where one goes to the route of Jihad, he is never coming back from it. Chibeb could be a caring, loyal and sensitive person - when he was not in his Jihad mode. When he was in his Jihad mode, he was ready and willing to kill in the name of Allah as many people as possible, had extremely religious views and was just a dangerous pain in everyone's ass.

Chibeb was eventually sentenced to life in prison in 2015, but last I heard of him, he is wanting his sentence to be revalued as he was diagnosed with schizophrenia. **But please do not make any mistakes of thinking he was not a full-blown Jihadist due to this - person can be a terrorist and mentally ill at the same time, these two are not mutually exclusive.**

American Radical: The Undercover Muslim FBI Agent Risking His Life To Save Yours is a good and entertaining look at the world of undercover as much as it is a look at radicalized mind.

Can you recognize an radicalized mind? Yes and no. Some do grow themselves a Jihad-beard, stop going to mosques, rant their beliefs. Some do not grow themselves a Jihad-beard, continue to go to mosques while ranting their beliefs. Some do not rant nor do they go or stop going to mosques. Some are just like you - modern, living the life to the fullest, looking like an every day Joe with no religious signs. Some are just like you - religiously devoted, peaceful on the surface.

There is a lot of different Islamic groups with same ideologies but different focus points. How and when attacks occur depends on multiple factors, from which you get an better understanding here by reading between the lines.

Recommended reading for everyone interested on the subject, but also timely as Al-Qaeda is coming back stronger than before, and they have not lost their fascination to play with their enemies trains.

Caidyn (SEMI-HIATUS; BW Reviews; he/him/his) says

This review and others can be found on BW Book Reviews.

Admittedly, I didn't expect to like this as much as I did. But, Tamer's voice shone through in what could have been a very dull book to make it interesting. In short, this is the story of an undercover agent (and Tamer Elnoury is not his real name) who went from busting drug rings as a police officer to being an FBI agent dealing with terrorism. Not only was this book interesting to listen to, I really found it enlightening.

Tamer, as a Muslim, spoke about how hard it was to work with and against radical Islamists since he grew up as a mainstream Muslim who grew up succeeding in the American dream. His beliefs align with the five pillars, that Islam is not a violent religion and that jihad is an internal struggle with God in order to submit. It's not about harming and killing innocents.

He also showed how hard undercover work is and what it's like. I think that because of police shows, we

have an idea of what that means and entails, yet you don't really know. It's hard work. And when you're confronted with becoming friends and confidants to people who take something so personal to you and weaponize it, that's not easy.

Finally, I really found it enlightening about how many plots get foiled and how. It's not just that the country finds out and destroys it (what I'd call an external cause), but also internal. Tamer stated that not all terrorist groups are the same. There are many opinions and they all vie for the same resources.

This book, while about a very serious topic, was fun and interesting. It also had a great message of unity to it. The only way to take away this threat is to understand it, even if we don't want to. To do that, you have to hear the voices of the mainstream and not block them out. If that's not a good message, I don't know what is.

Marisa says

I really wasn't expecting to enjoy this as much as I did. I do wish that Elnoury had provided a little more insight into why he decided to go into law enforcement in the first place, but in general, the book is deeply insightful and almost impossible to put down. I would *highly* recommend the audiobook for a really immersive experience!

Renee (itsbooktalk.com) says

4.5 stars!!

This is one of those books that happened to catch my eye as it has two of my favorite buzzwords in it...Undercover and FBI...In short, I loved it! Not only is it the most fascinating book I've read in a long time, it's also a very uniquely written memoir in that it reads like a page turning novel. In fact, as I mentioned in my Monday post, it very much reads like an episode of Homeland. There were times I had to remind myself the difference is that this story is actually true which in my opinion made it all the more terrifying.

As stated in the blurb, Tamer is a pseudonym for an undercover counterterrorism agent in the FBI. I thought he did a fantastic job sharing as many details as he could about the world of an undercover agent, how they train, how they live their "legends," and the extreme emotional/psychological stress it takes on their psyches. Especially when dealing with the warped and twisted minds of the radical Islamic terrorists he worked to bring down in this story. I appreciated how well he explained who these terrorists were, where they came from and how they came to believe what they do. I hung on every word as he described conversations in which the terrorists laid out detailed plans to kill as many Americans as possible...it was scary to read and I don't think most of us understand what is happening in our own country on a daily basis.

The first person narrative structure of the story worked brilliantly in that I felt like I was a fly on the wall watching each scene unfold. The pace was steady although I will say I thought it dragged a little in the middle but the last third made up for it and I couldn't turn the pages fast enough to find out how it was all going to unfold. I love the way the authors created such a suspenseful storyline while also providing behind the scenes details of the operations. I've been recommending this book all week to people, especially to my friends who love Homeland so if you enjoy page turners that are timely, current, and so relevant to our world right now I encourage you to give this a try!

You can find all my reviews at www.itsbooktalk.com

Mark Mortensen says

It's rare that one individual has a direct impact upon the welfare of society. This memoir follows an Egyptian Muslim who assimilates into America and willingly serves as an undercover FBI agent to fight counter-terrorism. The author who prays regularly to Allah notably states "*The Quran specifically states the Muslims must abide by the country's laws in which they reside*".

This fast paced nonfiction action thriller is extremely inspiring. I'm thankful for heroes who dedicate their career and life to protect others, while rooting out evil.

Ben Salkowe says

Reading this during the vulgar immigration debate this week was a surreal experience. Elnourey's story reads like a suspense thriller that is hard to put down as he infiltrates and then takes down a terrorist sleeper cell. But the parts that most made me stop and think were his reflections on his own life and the immigrant experience in America.

"I will never forget the day I became an American," he writes. "But my parents still sent me to Islamic school every Sunday to maintain my religion. We traveled back to Egypt every summer so I'd never forget my culture. My mother always spoke Arabic to me so I'd know my native language. None of that made me less patriotic."

Elnourey argues that the real undoing of radicals and terrorists cannot come from closing borders or isolating immigrants. "Keeping America's doors open ensures that when we are threatened by an enemy, we will always have someone who looks like them to help defeat them. Our best defense is inclusion."

Elnourey is of course the most obvious hero of the story. But the countless other Americans in the book, with all different names and stories of their own, are all heroic reminders of what makes his work possible. And each is a reminder of the common beliefs and goodness we all share.

I only wish our leaders who spent this week arguing over who to exclude from our country, would understand these stories, too.

Lou says

I am extremely interested by terrorism and wanted to use my legal background to become a part of the counter-terrorism operation in the UK, before unfortunately falling ill. I believe we have some incredible individuals that are willing to put themselves in danger to protect their mother country and the author is just one of those doing so in America.

Tamer Elnoury (a pseudonym) poses as an affluent Al-Qaeda sympathiser and is in a race against time to gain the terrorists' trust in order to bring them down. In the aftermath of 9/11, long-time undercover agent Elnoury joined an elite counter-terrorism unit. Its mission? To infiltrate terror cells, gain detailed knowledge

of their networks and bring them successfully to justice.

"Terrorist Hunter" is a detailed look into US government implementations after the atrocity of 9/11, in order to infiltrate terror cells with the aim of stopping another similar tragedy from happening. People don't realise how difficult this job must be both physically and mentally. Guys like Elnoury put their lives in peril for the good of their country, it really is incredible. Luckily, nothing as horrendous as 9/11 has happened recently but whether that is down to these infiltration operations or just chance, it's impossible to say.

This is an engaging read that I got through pretty quickly. It discusses some points that feed into the overall story such as the view of Islam and the strain of being an undercover agent, to name but a few. If you are interested in the use of government agents in undercover operations or how we try to protect a country's citizens from terrorists then this is not a book to be missed, in my opinion.

Many thanks to Corgi for an ARC. I was not required to post a review and all thoughts and opinions expressed are my own.
