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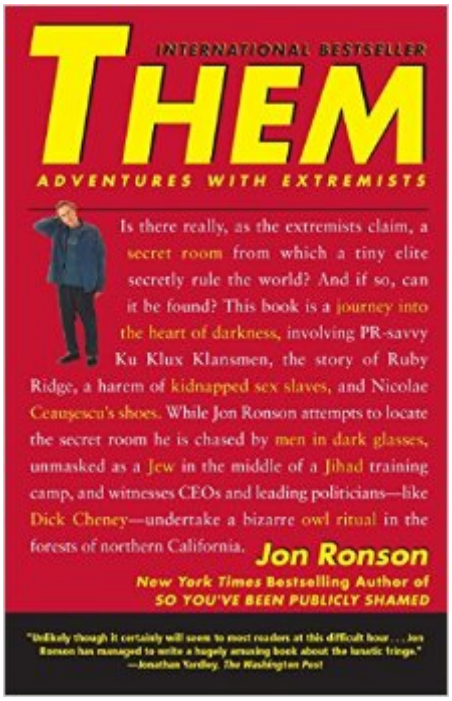
Them: Adventures With Extremists



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Synopsis

From the bestselling author of The Psychopath Test: A Journey Through the Madness Industry and So Youâ ™ve Been Publicly Shamed.A wide variety of extremist groups -- Islamic fundamentalists, neo-Nazis -- share the oddly similar belief that a tiny shadowy elite rule the world from a secret room. In Them, journalist Jon Ronson has joined the extremists to track down the fabled secret room. As a journalist and a Jew, Ronson was often considered one of "Them" but he had no idea if their meetings actually took place. Was he just not invited? Them takes us across three continents and into the secret room. Along the way he meets Omar Bakri Mohammed, considered one of the most dangerous men in Great Britain, PR-savvy Ku Klux Klan Grand Wizard Thom Robb, and the survivors of Ruby Ridge. He is chased by men in dark glasses and unmasked as a Jew in the middle of a Jihad training camp. In the forests of northern California he even witnesses CEOs and leading politicians -- like Dick Cheney and George Bush -- undertake a bizarre owl ritual. Ronson's investigations, by turns creepy and comical, reveal some alarming things about the looking-glass world of "us" and "them." Them is a deep and fascinating look at the lives and minds of extremists. Are the extremists onto something? Or is Jon Ronson becoming one of them?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It's rare to come across a book that's original, genuinely important - and very funny too. But Them, a series of interconnected essays by one of the UK's most important alternative journalists, is all these things, and it succeeds not merely because of its unexpected timeliness (Ronson's profile of Omar

Bakhri Mohammed, Britain's very own Bin Laden, was actually written four years ago) but because the author, unlike other humorous journalists, gets out and does some first-hand investigation. In Bakhri's case, this extended to engaging in a (beautifully-observed) year long association with the extremist that saw Ronson - a self-proclaimed liberal Jew of no strong religious or political convictions - become the would-be revolutionary's unpaid chauffeur and make frequent visits to his home. The strikingly off-key relationship that developed between the two is tellingly portrayed in deftly-paced vignettes:'Next morning I sat in Omar's living room while Omar played with his baby daughter.'"What's your daughter's name?" I asked him.'"It is a difficult name for you to understand," said Omar.'"Does it have an English translation?" I asked.'"Yes," said Omar, "it translates into English as 'The Black Flag of Islam'."'"Really?" I said. "Your daughter's name is The Black Flag of Islam?"'"Yes," said Omar.'"Really?" I said.'There was a small pause.'"You see," said Omar, "why our cultures can never integrate?"'Ronson, indeed, succeeds remarkably well in humanising the men (and they are, with only one exception, men) he writes about, and his book, though undoubtedly hilarious, is never played principally for laughs.

With an open mind and some charming naivete, Ronson went on an expedition to find not only those who obsess about the secret masters of the world but, just maybe, the masters themselves.Like others who have actually done honest fieldwork amongst these political exotica, Ronson meets a lot of kind, polite, and charming people -- as long as you happen to be the right race or creed. Many are reasonable and tolerant too -- at least when they don't have any power to realize their visions.From the vast zoo of modern conspiracy theory, Ronson mostly concentrates on the ZOG/Bilderberg/Trilateralist/Satanist clade which is usually associated with the right wing. But his years of research turn up some surprises.In pre-September 11th London, Ronson hangs out with Omar Bakri, self-described as Osama bin Laden's man in London. In America, we meet Thom Robb, Grand Wizard of some Klan sect in a world rife with internecine sniping, egomaniacs, and FBI informers. His claim to fame? He wants his disciples to follow his self-help program -- oh, and stop using the "N-word". With Jim Tucker, reporter for the notorious and defunct _Spotlight_ newspaper, he attempts to infiltrate the annual meeting of the legendary Bilderberg Group. Then there's ex-British sportscaster David Icke who insists that, when he talks about a conspiracy of world ruling reptilian space alien Illuminati, he really means space aliens and not Jews.And Ronson doesn't find extremism just among the conspiracy mongerers. The infamous actions of the U.S. government at Ruby Ridge are recounted as well as the press' general inability to see a distinction important to the Weavers and their supporters -- racial separatism as opposed to racial supremacy.

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