



A Foreigner Carrying in the Crook of His Arm a Tiny Bomb

Amitava Kumar

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Part reportage and part protest, *A Foreigner Carrying in the Crook of His Arm a Tiny Bomb* is an inquiry into the cultural logic and global repercussions of the war on terror. At its center are two men convicted in U.S. courts on terrorism-related charges: Hemant Lakhani, a seventy-year-old tried for attempting to sell a fake missile to an FBI informant, and Shahawar Matin Siraj, baited by the New York Police Department into a conspiracy to bomb a subway. Lakhani and Siraj were caught through questionable sting operations involving paid informants; both men received lengthy jail sentences. Their convictions were celebrated as major victories in the war on terror. In Amitava Kumar's riveting account of their cases, Lakhani and Siraj emerge as epic bunglers, and the U.S. government as the creator of terror suspects to prosecute. Kumar analyzed the trial transcripts and media coverage, and he interviewed Lakhani, Siraj, their families, and their lawyers. Juxtaposing such stories of entrapment in the United States with narratives from India, another site of multiple terror attacks and state crackdowns, Kumar explores the harrowing experiences of ordinary people entangled in the war on terror. He also considers the fierce critiques of post-9/11 surveillance and security regimes by soldiers and torture victims, as well as artists and writers, including Coco Fusco, Paul Shambroom, and Arundhati Roy.

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