

Hateland: A Long, Hard Look at America's Extremist Heart

Daryl Johnson

Prometheus Books (Jun 18, 2019)

Hardcover \$24.00 (288pp)

978-1-63388-516-5

White nationalists, mass shooters, conspiracy theorists: these scary labels seem to belong to the most extreme members of society. But as Daryl Johnson argues in *Hateland*, hateful extremism resides in the mainstream consciousness like a sleeper agent. As stories of hate-fueled violence and terror grow more and more frequent, Johnson exposes the catalysts that led to the epidemic of domestic terror facing the United States today.

Hateland begins by overturning the commonly held belief that violent extremists are always broken, mentally disturbed individuals. Instead, Johnson argues, plenty of “normal” people have the potential to turn to violence and hatred. Examining case studies of notorious killers like Dylann Roof, and unearthing the history of groups like the KKK, the book investigates what drives groups and individuals to extreme actions.

From chapters on alt-right social media presence to the aftermath of mass shootings, *Hateland* explores many possible theories. It is timely, direct, and insightful as it captures the political present and its various subcultures, and it underscores the important elements of American society that contribute to this climate.

Direct, powerful prose results in a disturbing look at the US. Every page seems to open new insights into the lives of those who hold alarming ideologies. A few instances are shorter on nuance, as when organizations like the New Black Panther Party are grouped with the Ku Klux Klan as similarly extremist, despite the differences between the actual physical violence the two perpetuate.

If there is one message to take away from this important book, it is that radicalization is a force with many dangerous outcomes, and that it is multiplying in our lifetimes. According to Johnson: in order to reduce hatred in the United States, we need to understand its complex, sometimes mystifying origins.

MYA ALEXICE (July/August 2019)

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