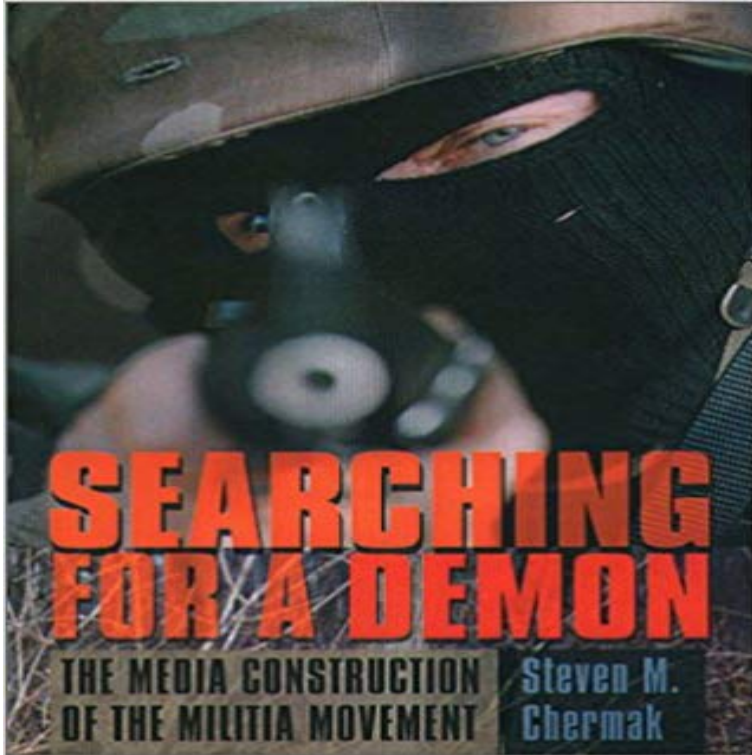


Searching for a Demon: The Media Construction of the Militia Movement



An examination of the ways in which the media demonized militia groups following the devastating bombing of the Alfred F. Murrah building in Oklahoma City. Using quantitative and qualitative research methods, Chermak offers a fresh perspective on how news coverage and popular entertainment transformed a largely overlooked movement into a symbol for this new threat of domestic terrorism. The author deals with topics such as the type and amount of coverage after the blast, how social problems are constructed in the news and why images of militias were framed in specific ways. He balances his account with a look at the philosophies, activities and strategies of militia groups. Drawing on extensive interviews he conducted at gun shows and preparedness exhibitions, Chermak compares and contrasts media depictions of militia life and ideology with accounts from members and leaders and he assesses how media coverage affected changes in the movement. In conclusion, he discusses the parallels between media treatment of militias in the wake of the Oklahoma City bombing and the coverage of the al-Qaeda terrorist network after the attacks on September 11, 2001.

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