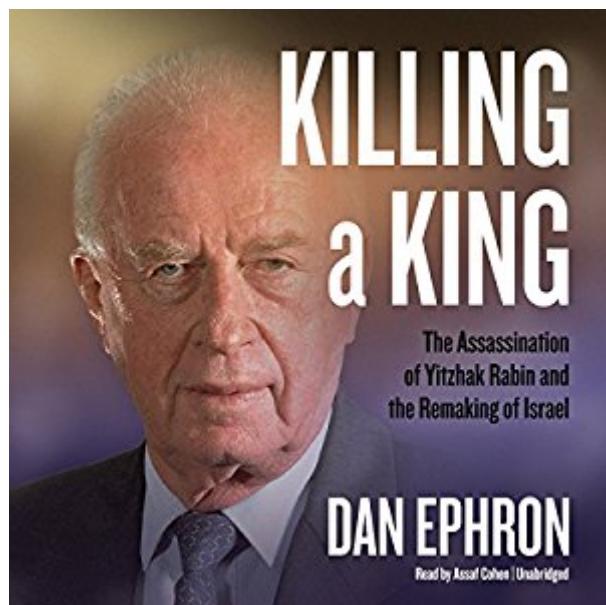


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Killing A King: The Assassination Of Yitzhak Rabin And The Remaking Of Israel



Synopsis

A riveting story about the murder that changed a nation: the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin remains the single most consequential event in Israel's recent history and one that fundamentally altered the trajectory for both Israel and the Palestinians. Killing a King relates the parallel stories of Rabin and his stalker, Yigal Amir, over the two years leading up to the assassination, as one of them planned political deals he hoped would lead to peace - and the other plotted murder. Dan Ephron, who reported from the Middle East for much of the past two decades, covered both the rally where Rabin was killed and the subsequent murder trial. He describes how Rabin, a former general who led the army in the Six Day War of 1967, embraced his nemesis, Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat, and set about trying to resolve the 20th century's most vexing conflict. He recounts in agonizing detail how extremists on both sides undermined the peace process with ghastly violence. And he reconstructs the relentless scheming of Amir, a 25-year-old law student and Jewish extremist who believed that Rabin's peace effort amounted to a betrayal of Israel and the Jewish people. As Amir stalked Rabin over many months, the agency charged with safeguarding the Israeli leader missed key clues, overlooked intelligence reports, and then failed to protect him at the critical moment, in November 1995. It was the biggest security blunder in the agency's history. Through the prism of the assassination, much about Israel today comes into focus, from the paralysis in peacemaking to the fraught relationship between current Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Barack Obama. Based on Israeli police reports, interviews, confessions, and the cooperation of both Rabin's and Amir's families, Killing a King is a tightly coiled narrative that reaches an inevitable, shattering conclusion. One can't help but wonder what Israel would look like today had Rabin lived.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 9 hours and 56 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Blackstone Audio, Inc.

Audible.com Release Date: December 30, 2015

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B019YAMRLG

Best Sellers Rank: #52 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > History > Middle East #82 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Politics & Current Events > Political History & Theory #102 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Middle East

Customer Reviews

This is a pretty remarkable piece of journalism and, perhaps only somewhat intentionally, political commentary. The journalistic part is fairly straightforward-- Ephron covers Rabin's later years, including the peace process, in an engaging if unremarkable way, while in parallel providing a window into the mind of his murderer, the religious right winger Yigal Amir. But what the book really does most interestingly is frame the politics of the event and its lasting impact. The peace process between Israelis and Palestinians is typically framed as a struggle between the interests of Israelis and Palestinians, and there's certainly some of that-- Rabin and Arafat each represented entrenched interests in a dispute over conflicted territory. But Ephron brilliantly highlights the other dimension of the conflict-- the Messianic religious conflict that underlies the political conflict and makes it so intractable. In this conflict, you can place the players into two categories-- there are the practical political players, who have a vision for what their region should look like, and have core and peripheral interests. They are willing to bargain over all of the peripheral interests, and potentially cede particular core interests so long as their rivals are willing to cede claims to other conflicting core interests. Rabin certainly belonged to this camp, and both Yasser Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas did and do as well, albeit on opposite sides. Then there are the messianists-- some (though not all) of Hamas certainly belongs, as do other religious Muslim Arab groups, but so equally do settler groups and the right-wingers who sympathize with them, such as the Amirs, the right-wing rabbis who provided the religious justification for Rabin's murder, and others.

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