



# Human Killing Machines

*Systematic Indoctrination in Iran,  
Nazi Germany, Al Qaeda, and Abu Ghraib*



ADAM LANKFORD

Sociology • Political Science • Criminal Justice

“Adam Lankford’s well-written and provocative new book, *Human Killing Machines: Systematic Indoctrination in Iran, Nazi Germany, Al Qaeda, and Abu Ghraib*, delivers a behavioral model that goes a long way toward explaining otherwise inexplicably inhuman actions by ‘normal’ human beings. The reader need not agree with every one of Lankford’s observations to recognize his insightfulness and the utility of his work for both scholars and practitioners. *Human Killing Machines* is ‘must reading’ for soldiers, diplomats, and political leaders of democratic countries as well as academics in the social sciences, international relations, and criminal justice.”

–**John T. Fishel**, professor emeritus of national security policy, National Defense University

“This book is a must read. It should be required reading for all police officers. Hopefully, by understanding the process of systematic indoctrination, as so aptly described by Adam Lankford, those entrusted with the power of the state will mightily resist any pull toward acts of unredeemable violence.”

–**Drew Diamond**, Chief of Police (Ret.), Tulsa, OK

“*Human Killing Machines* is a work of diligent scholarship marked by skillful exposition and compelling prose. This book deals with issues that matter to our way of life and sheds light on how we might better understand and ameliorate the potential for violence, including catastrophic violence, that dogs the modern world.”

–**Robert Johnson**, professor of justice, law, and society, American University

They usually start out as ordinary people, doing their best to deal with mixed messages in a complex world. What they don’t realize is that they may be the targets of a violent system that is building an obedient workforce. One day they’re enjoying a few laughs with buddies and, seemingly the next day, they wake up as human killing machines. And they allow it to happen.

Addressing one of the most serious threats to the world today, *Human Killing Machines* applies the model of systematic indoctrination to case studies of brutality in Iran, Nazi Germany, Al Qaeda, and Abu Ghraib. The book reveals how these transformations take place—how systems redefine morality to turn ordinary people into torturers, terrorists, and genocidal killers. Adam Lankford also provides a side-by-side comparison of these cases across six critical variables, in order to identify key similarities and differences and the potential for strategic countermeasures. Based on this analysis, he offers recommendations for how we can begin to reduce Al Qaeda terrorists’ commitment to their missions, reform the U.S. military and increase its accountability, and spark an awakening in Iran so that the oppressive regime goes out with a whimper—not with a bang.

**Adam Lankford** is assistant professor of criminal justice at The University of Alabama.

For orders and information please contact the publisher



Lexington Books

A division of Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200

Lanham, Maryland 20706

1-800-462-6420

[www.lexingtonbooks.com](http://www.lexingtonbooks.com)



LANKFORD

Human Killing Machines

