



Terrorism and the Politics of Fear

David L. Altheide

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In this powerful new book, sociologist David L. Altheide demonstrates how the mass media constructs a politics of fear in America. He argues that politicians and decision-makers bear much of the blame for the promotion of fear among citizens, resulting in the loss of civil liberties in return for greater protection. From a social interactionist perspective, Altheide presents his thesis that fear-as-entertainment informs the production of popular culture and news, generates profits, enables political decision-makers to cynically manipulate citizens, and can lead to major institutional changes, even war. The author dissects in turn: a modern propaganda campaign in the justification of the invasion of Iraq to the American people; the expansion of control and surveillance on the Internet; and the construction of a 'hero fighting terrorism' to promote patriotism, in the story of a promising young Arizona sports hero, Pat Tillman, who joined the Army and was killed by his fellow Rangers in Afghanistan. This thoughtful treatment of a timely subject will be indispensable to teachers and students of sociology, media, politics, and criminology studies.

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