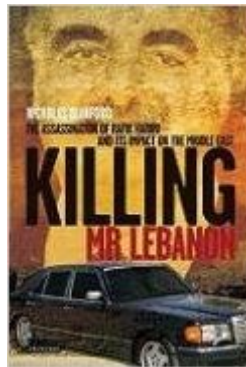




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Killing Mr. Lebanon: The Assassination Of Rafik Hariri And Its Impact On The Middle East



Synopsis

Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, known as *Mr. Lebanon,* was killed by a massive explosion as he drove along the Beirut seafront on Valentine's Day in 2005. A business entrepreneur, who rose from nothing to become one of the most powerful men in Lebanese politics, Hariri's assassination has incited outrage and suspicion. Nicholas Blanford investigates Hariri's past, inextricably linked with that of Lebanon, and uncovers a murky world of shifting alliances between businesses, the military, politicians and diplomats. Based on exclusive interviews with key players, he traces the last weeks of Hariri's life, and reveals who stood to gain from his death. He assesses its impact on Lebanese politics including the withdrawal of Syrian troops, Hezbollah and the peace process. Full of intrigue, shady characters, and suspense, Killing Mr Lebanon brings to light what the Lebanese people have clamored for since Valentine's Day 2005: *al haqiqa'* – the truth.

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Customer Reviews

A rich piece of storytelling--Blanford provides the definitive account of the assassination of Hariri and Lebanon's subsequent 'Cedar Revolution'--dramatic events which are essential to understanding the Arab quest for freedom...Brilliant stuff.--Scott McLeod, Middle East correspondent, Time Magazine
*Nick Blanford, a veteran Beirut correspondent, reveals what led to the assassination of Rafik Hariri and how the murder altered the course of Lebanon's history and the balance of power in the Middle East. This is not only a real life thriller but a story with huge

implications for the future of the region. Drawing on more than a decade of experience in Lebanon, Blanford is the man to tell it.*-- Richard Beeston, The Times

”If you are going to read one book on Lebanon, this is the one. It is as gripping as a thriller, yet packed with sober insight and history. More than an excellent biography of Rafik Hariri, a man of oversized ambition and appetite, who dominated Lebanese politics for a quarter century and rebuilt Beirut, it is a tour de force of contemporary Lebanese politics. Blanford plumbs Lebanon’s relations with both Saudi Arabia and Syria, following the money and charting the tug of war between the regional powers. We come to understand why Hariri was murdered just as he led his country across the threshold of independence. Required reading for anyone interested in today’s Middle East.”--Joshua Landis, ”Syria Comment” contributor and Assistant Professor of Middle East Studies, University of Oklahoma

”How the 2005 death of a former prime minister sparked a popular uprising, forced Syria to end its 30-year occupation of Lebanon, and upset power balances throughout the region.” --Financial Times

”A brisk portrait of the man’s travails and legacy.” - Max Roedenbeck, New York Review of Books

Nicholas Blanford is The Times’ (London) correspondent in Beirut, where he has lived for over ten years.

Very informative! This book deserves more attention than it has received. Great Writer! Well written!

Blanford writes superbly, and this tour de force captures the dynamics of complex Lebanon as well as any. Of particular interest is the rarely detailed description of Syrian hegemony of the country, their parasitic-like extraction of wealth along with national confidence, and the complicity of neighbors of this crime (particularly Saudi Arabia and Egypt). His descriptions of Hariri as a complex tycoon/altruist are masterful. The only weakness is the epilogue. Clearly written in the heat of a war as the book was going to press, it evokes horrible images of that war without providing the clear-headed analysis typical of the rest of the book: as such it appeals to some (see other reviews) but detracts in the long run. Blanford should either remove or expand this from future editions: it has no business being in an otherwise excellent work.

I knew Nick in Beirut as an energetic reporter always looking for big stories. His reports covered a wide array of issues including the Hizbullah-Israel war prior to 2000, interviews with Palestinian leadership in Lebanon, coverage of the post-Iraq war in 2003 and a lot of other issues. Nick has a

keen eye to detail and a broad knowledge of the region. His book shows his talent as someone who digs for stories and gets inside info. I have been waiting for this book for a while, and once I got a grip of it, it did not disappoint me at all. I especially liked the theme of this book, Mr. Lebanon, which has been indeed a title the assassinated Lebanese Prime Minister strived to win. Blanford's book is well-researched with a number of interesting interviews, accurate background information and great style. Buy the book and read it, you'll see that it is money well spent.

Buy this book if you want to understand in detail what has happened in Lebanon in the last few years - those that bracket Hariri's rise and death. I have found that the praise of previous reviewers for the book, is fully deserved. On the other hand, if you are visiting Lebanon for the first time, or want to have a perspective on why this country has lived through such upheavals, you should read books that take a longer term or more fundamental perspective. This book tends to be very detailed, mentioning strings of names, and assuming that you have a background knowledge of the history of Lebanon, and Syria.

Blanford's Killing Mr. Lebanon is a well-written and gripping account of the life of Rafiq Hariri and the aftermath of his assassination. It is also a fascinating look at Syria's iron-grip on Lebanon throughout the 1990s, and the politics between the two countries. The book opens with a dramatic account of the hours leading up to Hariri's assassination, and follows with an account of Hariri's early life and his initial foray into the treacherous world of Lebanese politics. The next section of the book focuses on Hariri's ups and downs in the political system, from his ambitious plan to rebuild Beirut after the 1975-1990 civil war, and his years as Prime Minister which often brought him into conflict with the Syrian leadership. The last half of the book looks at the assassination of Hariri and the aftermath, the "Cedar Revolution", the UN investigation into Hariri's death, and the continuing Hizbullah-Israel conflict. Blanford's account and analysis of the March 14th coalition is particularly moving, showing just how large the image of Rafiq Hariri is in Lebanon. The book ends with a short epilogue describing the brutal Israeli campaign of destruction in Lebanon during the summer of 2006. Overall, Blanford's book is very well-written, gripping, and hard to put down. He has an excellent grasp of Lebanese politics, and much of the book is based on interviews with over 70 people - many who are high ranking politicians in Lebanon (such as Fouad Siniora and Walid Jumblatt) or close to Hariri (such as his son Saad Hariri). This is an excellent book for anyone interested in modern Lebanese-Syrian relations, Rafiq Hariri, or the Middle East in general. Highly recommended.

This book is extremely well written and hard to put down once started. It is very informative both on the brutal murder of Rafik Hariri and the current political situation in Lebanon, including its relationship with Syria. Blanford covers a lot of detail overlooked by most standard media outlets which really helps the reader fill in the gaps surrounding this tragedy and what led up to it. A must read for anyone interested in the region. The Epilogue, in which Blanford discusses Israel's attack on Lebanon in the summer of 2006 was particularly interesting for me as I happened to be there through the duration of the siege. It is nice to come across quality reporting without the dilution and distortion of current events by US media.

An excellent, timely, and fascinating treatment of current events in Lebanon, and the March 14 political movement. The genius of the book is helping the reader to understand the passion that Mr. Hariri evoked in the Lebanese people and abroad while still making clear his faults as a leader. It is a special thrill to have been introduced to various personalities in their own words throughout the book, and find them all in the news to this day.

A well documented book that is easy to read and hard to put down. It accurately describes the events that led to Hariri's assassination both on the local and the international scene in a lively manner with a detailed witnesses account of the days and hours leading to 14 February 2005. It provides valuable insight in the events unfolding in Lebanon today more particularly the recent Israeli Hezbollah war and the governmental crisis. This book is a must read for anyone wishing to understand the intricacies of Lebanese politics and the Syrian and regional dimension of the events unfolding right now in front of our eyes. In my opinion it plugs a major hole in international reporting on Lebanese stories as it provides an adequate and thorough background that is often lacking in short articles.

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