

One Day in September: The Full Story of the 1972 Munich Olympics Massacre and the Israeli Revenge Operation "Wrath of God"

By Simon Reeve

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At 4:30 a.m. on September 5, 1972, a band of Palestinian terrorists took eleven Israeli athletes and coaches hostage at the Summer Olympics in Munich. More than 900 million viewers followed the chilling, twenty-hour event on television, as German authorities desperately negotiated with the terrorists. Finally, late in the evening, two helicopters bore the terrorists and their surviving hostages to Munich's little-used Fürstenfeldbruck airfield, where events went tragically awry. Within minutes all of the Israeli athletes, five of the terrorists, and one German policeman were dead.

Why did the rescue mission fail so miserably? And why were the reports compiled by the German authorities concealed from the public for more than two decades? Reeves takes on a catastrophe that permanently shifted the political spectrum with a fast-paced narrative that covers the events detail by detail. Based on years of exhaustive research, *One Day in September* is the definitive account of one of the most devastating and politically explosive tragedies of the late twentieth century, one that set the tone for nearly thirty years of renewed conflict in the Middle East.

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- Rank: #390738 in Books
- Published on: 2011-08-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x 6.00" w x 6.00" l, .86 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 352 pages

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review
In the early hours of September 5, 1972, members of the ultraviolent Palestinian terrorist faction Black September scaled the perimeter fence surrounding the Olympic Village in Munich. Their target was the temporary home of the Israeli Olympic team. Within 24 hours, 11 Israelis, five terrorists, and a German policeman were dead.

Based largely on exhaustive investigation for the Oscar-winning documentary, *One Day in September* is the definitive account of the tragedy. Simon Reeve has gathered extraordinary information from a number of sources, including recently released Stasi files and interviews with key figures, including the families of the hostages, politicians, policemen, advisors, fellow athletes, media figures, and even the lone surviving member of the group that carried out the attack. Reeve's control over his material is admirable. He vividly paints images of the individuals involved, humanizing a narrative that cracks and buzzes with the compact tension of those 24 hours. At the same time, he provides the background to the attack, filling in vital historical context from the distant and recent past, such as the Arab-Jewish dispute that produced this and other terrorist actions and their responses.

Reeve conveys the public horror of Jews being incarcerated on German soil, which led the German authorities to make crucial judgments, with tragic results. Fatal errors were made that can only be fully understood through the underlying dynamics of not only Middle East history, but also postwar European politics, individual and institutional arrogance, inexperience, and political pressure--including from the International Olympic Committee. Reeve follows up the events of that day by exposing the full extent of the Israeli revenge mission, which over the next 20 years hunted down and killed those responsible for the attack. He has not only written a compelling book, but provided a considerable service in allowing readers to understand the forces of hatred and history that conspired toward inevitable, but no less tragic human consequences.

Those who were a part of the huge live media audience that watched helplessly as events unfolded will undoubtedly experience again the sense of dread at recalling those traumatized, shackled figures led out from the Olympic Village to their fate on a German airfield. Those who make the mistake of thinking the dark days of international terrorism are history will read *One Day in September* and remember that the same underlying tensions still cast shadows over our present and our future. *--Fiona Buckland, Amazon.co.uk*

From School Library Journal

Adult/High School-A comprehensive and unsettling account of a horrific occurrence that shocked millions in 1972. The Summer Olympics were held in (West) Germany for the first time since 1936, amid hopes for an open, nonmilitaristic competition. Early on the morning of September 5th, eight mem-bers of a PLO faction called Black Septem-ber snuck into the Olympic Village and stormed the men's residence, seizing 11 Is-raeli athletes and coaches. Two were killed immediately, and the remaining nine (along with five of the terrorists) were slain less than 24 hours later in a badly bungled rescue at-tempt at F•rstenfeldbruck airport. Reeve's book originated with research conducted for an Oscar-winning documentary, but the vol-ume goes beyond the film to present many disturbing and previously unknown facts. While the film focuses on the massacre itself, the text covers acts of retaliation and cover-up that continued for years afterward. Indeed, one vital source of information is an investigative report, the existence of which was denied by German officials for

20 years, and came to light only through the persistent ac- tions of family members of the murdered ath-letes. Despite the regrettable omission of an index, Reeve's book is an important one since it deals with many issues-terrorism, anti-Semitism and other forms of racism, and Middle East unrest.-Dori DeSpain, Fairfax County Public Library, VA

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Review
"Fascinating...A gripping account." (*Jewis Book World*)

"An important book." (*Chicago Tribune*)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Ashley Paul:

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