



ASSIST's Helping Hand Newsletter

Terrorism Survivors Helping Survivors

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 01
APR TO JUN 2025

By Worley (Lee) Reed



Manson Cult

ASSIST is dedicated to helping injured survivors of terrorism with legal, medical and financial assistance based on available organizational funds. ASSIST endeavors to fill the gap between government entitlements and real need.

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ASSIST is a IRS Approved 501 (c) 3 Public Charity. Contributions and dues are tax deductible as prescribed by law. Please see your tax professional for details.

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In past years, when I spoke to various groups about terrorism, someone would occasionally ask, "Are terrorist groups really cults?" My answer would be yes and no. At first glance, cults and terrorist organizations might seem to belong to entirely separate realms. One is often linked to spiritual or emotional devotion, while the other is associated with political extremism and violence. However, a closer look reveals that, despite their differing end goals, both types of groups share striking similarities in the ways they manipulate their followers, structure their operations, and impact society.

Cults typically form around a charismatic leader whose vision promises salvation,

enlightenment, or a transformative experience. Their allure is often rooted in an idealized world view that positions the group as the sole possessors of hidden truths. By capitalizing on feelings of alienation, personal crises, or a yearning for meaning, cults create a narrative that resonates deeply with vulnerable individuals.

In contrast, terrorist organizations emerge from highly charged political or socio-

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We are grateful to the US Department of Justice and the National Organization for Victims Assistance (NOVA) for their support and leadership in the area of victims' rights.

Are Terrorist Organizations Cults?

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economic conditions. They are often ideologically driven, aiming to reshape society or topple established systems through acts of violence. While their propaganda also taps into discontent and perceived injustice, their narratives are constructed to justify radical, sometimes lethal, actions as necessary for achieving a larger political or ideological revolution.

Both cults and terrorist organizations employ sophisticated recruitment strategies to attract and retain members. They focus heavily on psychological manipulation and indoctrination, creating an “us versus them” mentality that isolates members from external, dissenting influences. Cults often create insulated communities where critical questioning is discouraged. Techniques such as love bombing (the action or practice of lavishing someone with attention or affection, especially to influence or manipulate them), sleep deprivation, and enforced isolation serve to override independent thought. The result is a tightly knit social unit where loyalty to the leader and by extension, the cult’s ideology is paramount. On the other hand, terrorist organizations similarly isolate their recruits through radicalization processes. Propaganda, emotional appeals, and, at times, the exploitation of personal grievances help to forge a powerful collective identity. This group identity is maintained by continuously reinforcing narratives of oppression and

martyrdom, justifying violent actions as noble sacrifices for a perceived greater good.

The dynamics of power vary significantly between cults and terrorist organizations, yet both rely on centralized control and obedience. Cults are typically characterized by highly centralized leadership, involving one dominant figure who exercises near-total control over the group’s doctrines and daily life. This authoritarian structure not only stifles dissent but also ensures that the leader’s vision remains unchallenged by internal debate. Terrorist organizations, on the other hand, may exhibit a dual nature. Some groups are structured in loosely connected, decentralized cells, which makes them adaptable and difficult for authorities to infiltrate. Others may rally around charismatic leaders who, while not controlling every tactical decision, symbolize the ideological core of the movement. Whether centralized or fragmented, the emphasis on obedience and commitment is a common thread.

A distinguishing feature between the two lies in their relationship to violence. In many cults, violence is not the primary means of communication or defense. Historically, however, some cults have resorted to violence when confronted by external challenges or internal crises. Instances such as mass suicides or targeted attacks against defectors underscore that extreme measures can be a byproduct of the group’s insular mindset. Terrorist organizations embrace violence as a fundamental instrument. For them, orchestrated acts



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of terror are not only a method of operational execution but also a calculated strategy to instill fear, disrupt societal norms, and draw global attention to their cause. The use of violence is both a tool and a symbol, reflecting the ruthless determination of these groups to achieve their radical objectives.

The psychological grip of both cults and terrorist organizations extends far beyond the confines of the group. For members, the process of indoctrination creates strong emotional bonds, and an overwhelming sense of identity tied to the group's mission. Former cult adherents often face tumultuous recoveries marked by intense feelings of betrayal, loss, and isolation. Emerging from the protective (albeit damaging) environment of the cult can leave them struggling with identity, trust, and reintegration into society. Defectors from terrorist organizations similarly confront the daunting task of deradicalization. They not only have to dismantle the ideological constructs that justified violence but also cope with potential legal repercussions, societal stigma, and the psychological aftermath of having been involved in extreme acts.

Both cults and terrorist organizations leave indelible marks on society. Cults can erode social trust by fostering environments of extreme secrecy and internal dependency. Their actions might lead to isolated incidents that damage public confidence in community and religious institutions. Terrorist organizations, however, have a more overt and far-

reaching impact. Their strategic violence is designed to destabilize entire regions, polarize communities, and force governments into reactive measures that may further inflame social divisions.

Understanding these dynamics is crucial. By recognizing the similarities in recruitment tactics, psychological manipulation, and leadership strategies, law enforcement, mental health professionals, and society at large can better address the challenges posed by such groups. In turn, more effective strategies can be developed to support affected individuals and prevent vulnerable people from being drawn into these destructive trajectories.

Though cults and terrorist organizations arise from different ideological roots and pursue distinct ultimate goals, they share an unsettling set of practices aimed at gaining control over individuals. From charismatic leadership and isolating tactics to the use of violence and psychological coercion, the methods of these groups expose fundamental vulnerabilities in human society. As society continues to grapple with extremism in its many forms, understanding these overlapping mechanisms of control remains essential for both prevention and recovery. However, it is ironic that the goal of Islamic terrorists is to create a Caliph, which is a cult. ◇

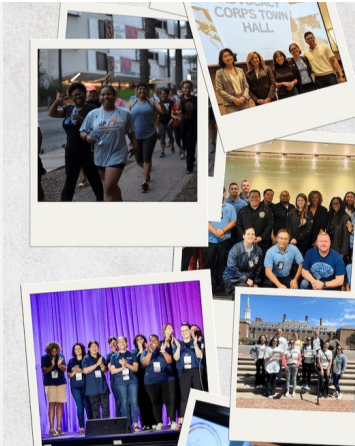


NOVA's Annual Training Event

July 22-25, 2025 | San Francisco, CA

Discover the power of connection and reignite your passion when you attend NOVA's Annual Training Event! Network with 1000s of victim assistance professionals from around the world, participate in expert training sessions and hear from dynamic keynote speakers.

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The Good Life Section

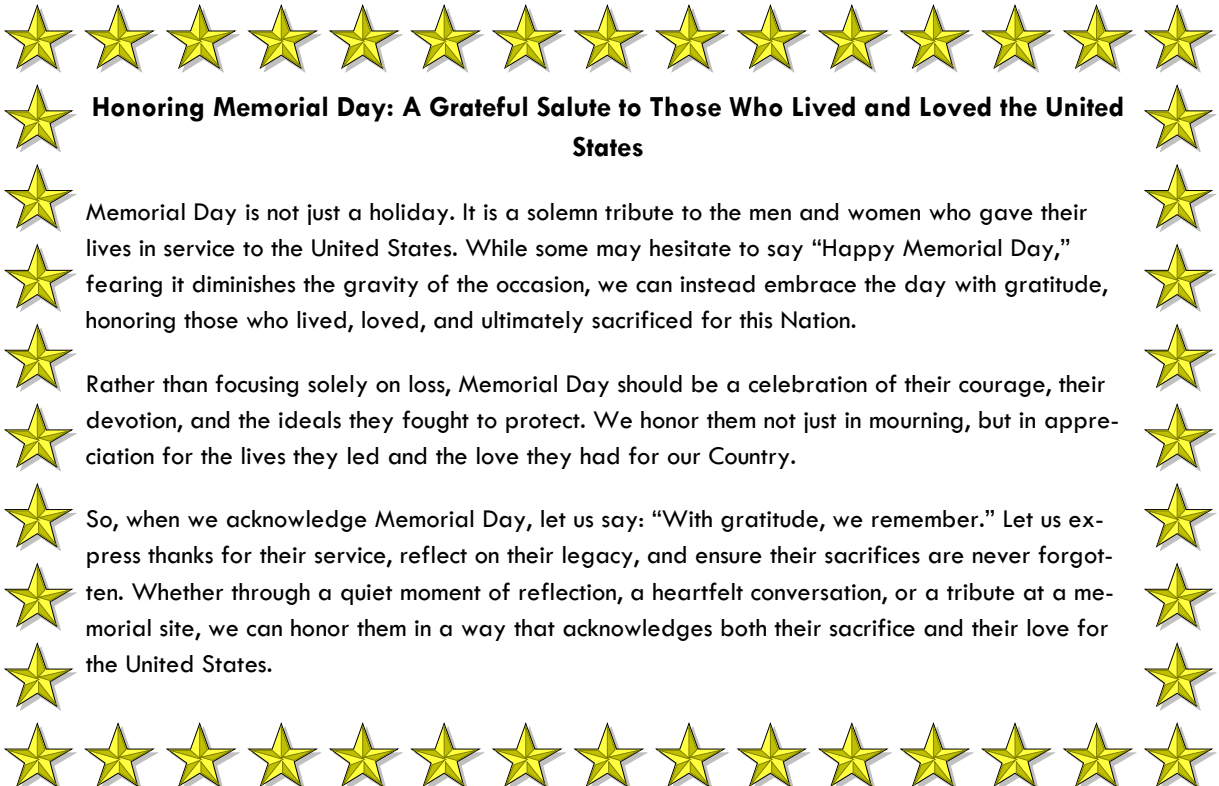


Honoring Memorial Day: A Grateful Salute to Those Who Lived and Loved the United States

Memorial Day is not just a holiday. It is a solemn tribute to the men and women who gave their lives in service to the United States. While some may hesitate to say "Happy Memorial Day," fearing it diminishes the gravity of the occasion, we can instead embrace the day with gratitude, honoring those who lived, loved, and ultimately sacrificed for this Nation.

Rather than focusing solely on loss, Memorial Day should be a celebration of their courage, their devotion, and the ideals they fought to protect. We honor them not just in mourning, but in appreciation for the lives they led and the love they had for our Country.

So, when we acknowledge Memorial Day, let us say: "With gratitude, we remember." Let us express thanks for their service, reflect on their legacy, and ensure their sacrifices are never forgotten. Whether through a quiet moment of reflection, a heartfelt conversation, or a tribute at a memorial site, we can honor them in a way that acknowledges both their sacrifice and their love for the United States.



ASSIST

Memorabilia

The ASSIST memorabilia below are available from ASSIST, 4371 Dinner Lake Blvd, Lake Wales, Florida 33859. Please add \$4.50 to your total order for shipping and handling. All profits from the sales of items goes to support terrorism survivors.



ASSIST Coin (front and back) \$10.00

ASSIST Lapel Pin \$4.00



ASSIST Hat Adjustable \$10.00



ASSIST T-Shirt \$10.00 L and XL Based on Availability of Size

ASSIST Calendar

Apr 2—TWA 840 Bombing 1986

Apr 5—Berlin Disco bombing 1986

Apr 18—Beirut US Embassy Bombing 1983

April 19—Oklahoma City Bombing 1995

April 20—Easter

May 1—NYC Car Bomb 2010

May 5—Cinco de Mayo

May 11—Mother's Day

May 12—Riyadh Western Housing Bombing 2003

May 17—Armed Forces Day

May 26—Memorial Day

Jun 1—Little Rock Recruiting Center Shooting 2009

Jun 6—D Day (WWII—1944) 81st Anniversary

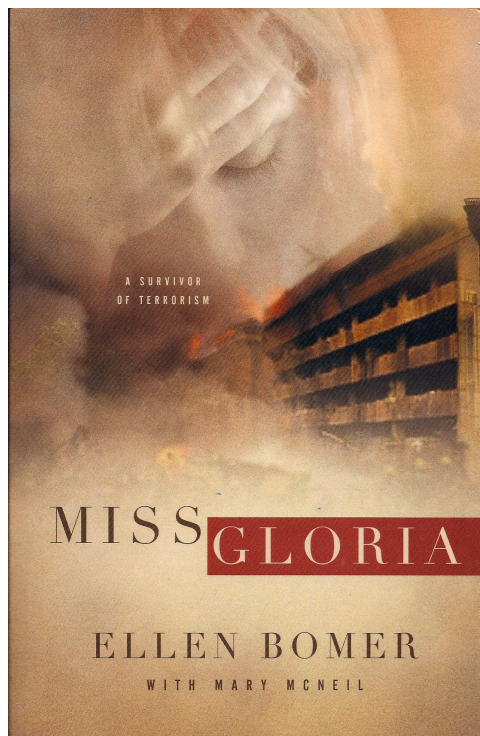
Jun 14—Flag Day

Jun 14—Karachi US Consulate Bombing 2002

Jun 15—Fathers' Day

Jun 19—Juneteenth

Note: If we inadvertently omit an important date, please contact us and we will correct



Miss Gloria details the struggles and triumphs of a wonderful lady blinded by the Al Qaeda attack on the United States Embassy, Nairobi, Kenya on August 7, 1998. We highly recommend this book as a must-read.

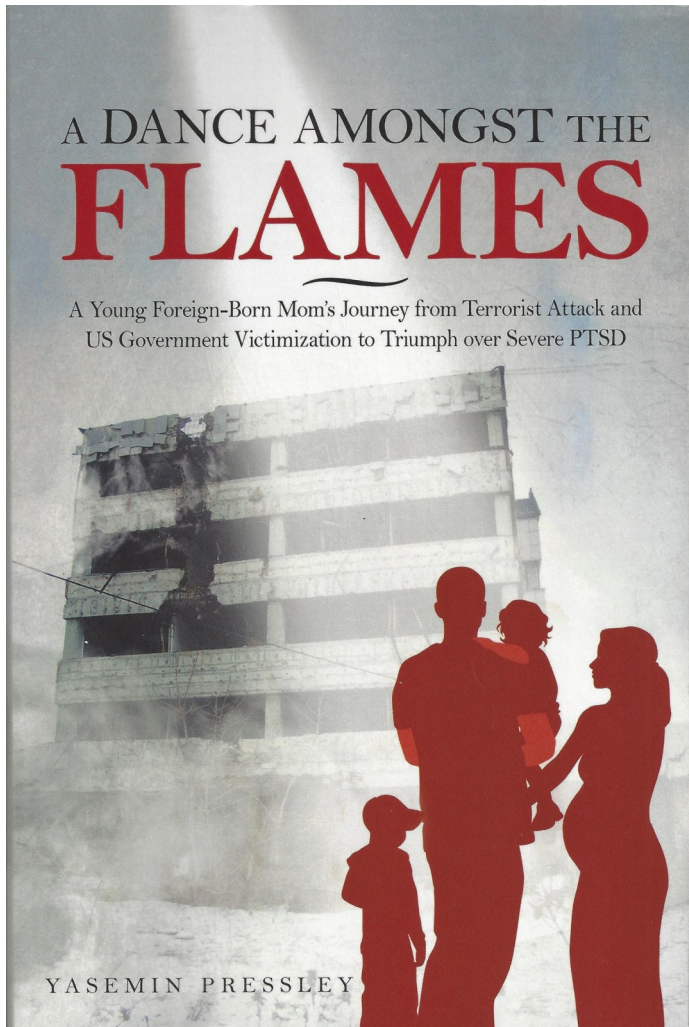
The book is available from the publisher: Redemption Press, 1730 Railroad St, Enumclaw, WA 98022 www.redemption-press.com as well as on Amazon Dot Com. http://www.amazon.com/Miss-Gloria-Terrorism-Ellen-Bomer/dp/1414113668/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1431978093&sr=8-3&keywords=Miss+Gloria



If you are seeking someone to help you manage your terrorism compensation or other funds, UBS has helped us find creative and safe investments. Our contact is Ms. Holidae Hayes, telephone: (202) 585-5372.

This is an unpaid endorsement by the ASSIST Staff, and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the ASSIST Board or ASSIST membership.

ASSIST has a new website: <http://www.assist-survivors.org> .



A Dance Amongst the Flames is a highly recommended new book about the unique experiences of a terrorism survivor. The book is available at your local bookstore or through Amazon® at https://www.amazon.com/Dance-Amongst-Flames-Foreign-Born-Victimization/dp/0578581515/ref=sr_1_1?crid=20YC01N2RX455&keywords=a+dance+amongst+the+flames+by+yasemin+pressley&qid=1576686264&sprefix=A+Dance+Am%2Caps%2C160&sr=8-1 . A preview of the book can be found on Youtube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikt9Hk01818> .

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