

Sexual repression and rejection turns young idealists into terrorists, claims U.S. prosecutor

By [DAILY MAIL REPORTER](#)

Terrorists are driven as much as by sexual frustration as they are by a desire to crush the West.

That's the assertion of a former New Jersey-based U.S. federal prosecutor who for many years has studied the Middle East.

Ken Ballen has spent the last five years interviewing hundreds of jihadists and found many were drawn into the hands of al Qaeda and the Taliban through forbidden love or from having a dysfunctional family.



Failed suicide bomber: Ahmed al Shayea now speaks out against al Qaeda

In an interview with Britain's The Sunday Times, Mr Ballen cites the case of two Saudi teenagers he dubbed the jihadi Romeo and Juliet.

Abdullah and Maryam fell in love but when he failed to raise the \$30,000 dowry demanded by Maryam's father, she had to marry an older man.

The couple went to Iraq and became jihadists with the idea that if they died for the cause they would be reunited in heaven.

Now back in Saudi Arabia, 'Abby' does not know if she became a suicide bomber or is still alive.

Mr Ballen was given unique access to the Saudi Rehabilitation Centre for former terrorists, after which he wrote a book entitled Terrorists In Love.

He told the Sunday Times: 'It's an ironic title because it's really about mislove or sexual repression.

'These are people with no kind of outlet. If you can't find love from your fellow men and women, that human connection, and the only way is through God, then you become more and more fanatical and more subject to manipulation by others.'



Forbidden love and dysfunctionality: Frustration helps to radicalise many of those fighting a 'holy war'

He also cites the case of Ahmad al Shayea, a Saudi who could never please his father.

After his father slapped him around the face in public outside a restaurant in their home town, Shayea quit school and went to fight in Iraq in a bid to win over his father.



Outspoken: Prosecutor and author Ken Ballen risked his life interviewing a senior Taliban figure. His decision, in part, was fuelled by seeing photos of U.S. soldiers torturing Iraqis at Abu Graib prison.

Shayea was asked to drive an oil tanker into a Christian community in Baghdad on Christmas Eve in 2004.

Eight people were killed, Shayea survived, albeit badly burned.

He was nursed by Americans. They were the first Americans he had ever met and was apparently bowled over by their kindness.

Shayea is now anti-al Qaeda.

Mr Ballen has much experience of dealing with hardened criminals.

As a prosecutor he even managed to get inside a Colombian drug cartel.

He has interviewed a senior Taliban figure and has received death threats along the way.

Naturally with his experience and knowledge, Mr Ballen, who is Jewish, has forthright views on the war against terror.

He told the Sunday Times: 'You can't sit down with everyone and change the world.

'But if you sit down with no one, you're not going to get anywhere. And that's kind of American policy now.'