



Paranoid: Exploring Suspicion from the Dubious to the Delusional

David J. LaPorte

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From the pathological killer who gunned down the innocents at Virginia Tech to the average citizen who suspects the government is monitoring phone calls, the signs of suspiciousness and paranoia are all around us. In this comprehensive overview of an increasingly serious problem, an experienced psychologist and researcher describes what paranoia is, how and why it manifests itself, and the many forms it takes, including stalking, pathological jealousy, as a reaction to post-traumatic stress disorder, and perhaps even militia movements.

Using striking vignettes from the present and the past, each chapter illustrates specific manifestations of paranoia while also describing in layperson's terms the clinical analysis of the condition. Among the topics discussed are the evolutionary origins of our "suspiciousness system" and factors that can trigger it today, the connection between illicit drug usage and paranoid behavior, PTSD, violent expressions of paranoia, and options for treating various kinds of paranoia.

The author emphasizes that life in post-9/11 America is a fertile environment for paranoia; in an era of computer hackers, omnipresent security cameras, NSA surveillance, and terrorism, "normal" people have good reasons to be suspicious as their sense of security and privacy is undermined. But in such an insecure atmosphere, everyday suspicion can easily be ratcheted up, resulting in paranoia and occasionally violent outbursts. He warns of a possible epidemic of paranoia and suggests public health measures that could be used to counteract this potentially dangerous trend.

Whether you consider yourself susceptible to paranoia or know others who might be, this enlightening book will help you understand the many factors that can distort your mental outlook.

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