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Review of The Final Frontier

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LJ Review Cover Sheet and Survey

Your name: Michael F. Russo

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Title of the book: *The Final Frontier: America, Science, and Terror*

Author or editor of the book: Dominick Jenkins

This book is recommended for: academic libraries

Comments for your editor: If you send any more books by this author, please include a cyanide capsule.

This one was torture.

Review

Author: Dominick Jenkins

Title: *The Final Frontier: America, Science, and Terror*

Publisher: Verso

Release date: 12/5/2002

Number of pages: pages. 312

Features: 10 illustrations

Format: Cloth

ISBN: 1859846823

Price: \$25.00

In the alternate universe of Dominick Jenkins, murderers are victims; victims are terrorists; and democracy is tyranny.

Jenkins's pettishly didactic screed relies on gross generalizations to support its tenuous thesis that the United States of America is to blame—*totally*—for global terrorism. Jenkins reaches as far back as the Spanish-American War in this attempt to brand the U. S. as terrorism's instigator and worst perpetrator. While even Edmund Morris's sympathetic biography of Teddy Roosevelt concedes the war against Spain was almost exclusively the result of Roosevelt's jingoism, to extrapolate TR's mentality into the twenty-first century to make the case that September 11th was actually the fault of the United States is a truly mind-blowing exercise in vivid imagination.

Using this pathetically familiar blame-the-victim tact, Jenkins attempts to support an extreme leftist position, which holds the U. S.—specifically, American chemists post-World War I—solely responsible for everything from World War II and the Cold War to bad weather and cockroaches. He willingly—and repeatedly—applies Tocqueville's self-contradicting phrase "democratic despotism" to the conduct of the United States, a semantic contortion that can only leave the reader wondering what dictionary Jenkins uses.

Public libraries won't want this muddled scolding: it reads like a distempered dissertation. Academic libraries, however, in the spirit of intellectual freedom, may want this book, and to them it is reluctantly recommended.

Michael F. Russo

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