



The Taqwacores

By Michael Muhammad Knight

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A Muslim punk house in Buffalo, New York, inhabited by burqa-wearing riot girls, mohawked Sufis, straightedge Sunnis, Shi'a skinheads, Indonesian skaters, Sudanese rude boys, gay Muslims, drunk Muslims, and feminists. Their living room hosts parties and prayers, with a hole smashed in the wall to indicate the direction of Mecca. Their life together mixes sex, dope, and religion in roughly equal amounts, expressed in devotion to an Islamo-punk subculture, "taqwacore," named for taqwa, an Arabic term for consciousness of the divine.

Originally self-published on photocopiers and spiralbound by hand, *The Taqwacores* has now come to be read as a manifesto for Muslim punk rockers and a "*Catcher in the Rye* for young Muslims."

There are three different cover colors; red, white, and blue.

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Editorial Review

Review

"A manifesto for the Muslim punk movement."

"An absolutely fascinating book . . . Michael Muhammad Knight has bravely written what could well become an essential text."

About the Author

Michael Muhammad Knight converted to Islam at sixteen after reading Malcolm X's biography, and spent two months at Faisal Mosque in Islamabad, Pakistan. He later left orthodox Islam. His writing regularly appears in progressive Islamic venues. He lives in Western New York State.

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Jehangir Tabari came from California and often spoke of the Muslim punk scene out there' 'taqwacore' as he called it. Taqwacore bands ran the gamut in attitude and ideology; there were groups like the Bin Qarmats and the Zaqqums whose lyrics and behavior lurked somewhere between social protest and juvenile disesteem, but also bands such as Bilal's Boulder that wouldn't even allow girls in their shows. Some bands had high political content and others veered more toward the aloof Sufi end of the spectrum. Jehangir seemed equally proud of them all, as though nothing in the world could pin him down to an intellectual commitment. 'You should see it, yakee,' he told me once, sitting on the back of his car in a parking lot while we waited for Fasiq to buy rolling papers. 'I was at this fuckin' Mutaweens show in Sacramento and I'm in the pit, getting tossed around and whatever, and then the music just stops 'bam, just like that, it stops and we stop slamming into each other, everything just freezes and all you hear is the singer up there reciting ar-Rahman as beautiful as I'd ever heard, and he just keeps going with it' the whole sura, you know, all the fabi-ayyi ala irabbikuma tukazibans and shit, and all these hard-ass punks just stand there listening and by the time he's done, half of us are in fuckin' tears, bro.' 'Mash'Allah,' I replied gravely. Yeah, yakee. It's an amazing scene of people out there.'

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