



No Better Time: The Brief, Remarkable Life of Danny Lewin, the Genius Who Transformed the Internet

By Molly Knight Raskin

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No Better Time tells of a young, driven mathematical genius who wrote a set of algorithms that would create a faster, better Internet. It's the story of a beautiful friendship between a loud, irreverent student and his soft-spoken MIT professor, of a husband and father who spent years struggling to make ends meet only to become a billionaire almost overnight with the success of Akamai Technologies, the Internet content delivery network he cofounded with his mentor.

Danny Lewin's brilliant but brief life is largely unknown because, until now, those closest to him have guarded their memories and quietly mourned their loss. For Lewin was almost certainly the first victim of 9/11, stabbed to death at age 31 while trying to overpower the terrorists who would eventually fly American Flight 11 into the World Trade Center. But ironically it was 9/11 that proved the ultimate test for Lewin's vision—while phone communication failed and web traffic surged as never before, the critical news and government sites that relied on Akamai—and the technology pioneered by Danny Lewin—remained up and running.

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Editorial Review

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In the mid-1990s, when the Internet was beginning to attract exponentially more users, its architects were faced with surfing logjams that threatened to slow web traffic to a crawl. Offering one solution to the bottleneck, a group of MIT professors and grad students adapted inventive math algorithms for computer networks and earned rich rewards after forming Akamai Technologies. One key member of Akamai's team was Daniel Lewin, whose life was tragically cut short on 9/11 at 31 when the plane he was on crashed into the World Trade Center. In recounting Lewin's little-known but thoroughly captivating life story, journalist Raskin paints a portrait of a larger-than-life math genius who impressed everyone around him with his boundless energy and charisma. Before attending MIT, Lewin spent four years in the Israeli army's counterterrorism unit, a background that Lewin almost certainly drew on when he tried to stop the terrorists on American Airlines Flight 11, making him 9/11's first hero and victim. A superlatively written and well-deserved tribute to an overlooked Internet pioneer and true American hero. --Carl Hays

Review

Kirkus Reviews, 8/1/13

"Bittersweet but celebratory."

Booklist, 9/1/13

"Little-known but thoroughly captivating life story... A superlatively written and well-deserved tribute to an overlooked internet pioneer and true American hero."

Tablet Magazine, 9/11/13

"[A] terrific new biography."

Winnipeg Free Press, 9/9/13

"No Better Time is the chronicle of a man who gave his life to technology and gave his life for mankind."

The Daily Beast, 9/17/13

"This is Lewin's fascinating biography, but it is also a history of the Internet, and those who took it from clunky dial-up service to the speed-of-light marvel. It is also the story of the September 11 attacks themselves, and how they ground the exuberance of the 1990s to a halt. Raskin has meticulously reconstructed the buoyancy of the '90s dot-com boom, and her restraint in covering the attacks lends a sober poignancy to Lewin's story."

BusinessInsider.com, 11/7/13

"Awesome...I recommend it for any entrepreneur out there either working on a company or thinking about starting a company... Molly Knight Raskin, writes beautifully, deeply, and thoughtfully. She combines an origin story (for Akamai), a coming of age story (for Lewin), and a tragedy (for Lewin, his family, his extended family, and Akamai.) ...[A] great biography of an entrepreneur, his company, and his all too short life."

Jewish Review of Books, Winter 2013

"An engaging tale of a continent-straddling and action-packed but all-too-short life. Raskin's story of one

man's stunning success also elicits a nostalgia for the excitement of those years—when the Internet was new.”

About the Author

Molly Knight Raskin is a Columbia School of Journalism graduate who has reported for *Scientific American Mind*, *Psychology Today*, the *Washington Post*, the *Baltimore Sun*, and the *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*. Her television credits include two PBS documentaries. She lives in Washington, DC, with her husband and two daughters.

MollyKnightRaskin.com

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