



Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army

By Jeremy Scahill

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Meet Blackwater USA, the powerful private army that the U.S. government has quietly hired to operate in international war zones and on American soil. With its own military base, a fleet of twenty aircraft, and twenty-thousand troops at the ready, Blackwater is the elite Praetorian Guard for the "global war on terror"--yet most people have never heard of it. It was the moment the war turned: On March 31, 2004, four Americans were ambushed and burned near their jeeps by an angry mob in the Sunni stronghold of Falluja. Their charred corpses were hung from a bridge over the Euphrates River. The ensuing slaughter by U.S. troops would fuel the fierce Iraqi resistance that haunts occupation forces to this day. But these men were neither American military nor civilians. They were highly trained private soldiers sent to Iraq by a secretive mercenary company based in the wilderness of North Carolina. *Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army* is the unauthorized story of the epic rise of one of the most powerful and secretive forces to emerge from the U.S. military-industrial complex, hailed by the Bush administration as a revolution in military affairs, but considered by others as a dire threat to American democracy.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Scahill, a regular contributor to the *Nation*, offers a hard-left perspective on Blackwater USA, the self-described private military contractor and security firm. It owes its existence, he shows, to the post-Cold War drawdown of U.S. armed forces, its prosperity to the post-9/11 overextension of those forces and its notoriety to a growing reputation as a mercenary outfit, willing to break the constraints on military systems responsible to state authority. Scahill describes Blackwater's expansion, from an early emphasis on administrative and training functions to what amounts to a combat role as an internal security force in Iraq. He cites company representatives who say Blackwater's capacities can readily be expanded to supplying brigade-sized forces for humanitarian purposes, peacekeeping and low-level conflict. While emphasizing the possibility of an "adventurous President" employing Blackwater's mercenaries covertly, Scahill underestimates the effect of publicity on the deniability he sees as central to such scenarios. Arguably, he also dismisses too lightly Blackwater's growing self-image as the respectable heir to a long and honorable tradition of contract soldiering. Ultimately, Blackwater and its less familiar counterparts thrive not because of a neoconservative conspiracy against democracy, as Scahill claims, but because they provide relatively low-cost alternatives in high-budget environments and flexibility at a time when war is increasingly protean. (Apr. 10)

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Review

"A crackling exposé of the secretive military contractor Blackwater."—***The New York Times Book Review***

"[Scahill] is a one-man truth squad."—**Bill Moyers**

"[An] utterly gripping and explosive story."—**Naomi Klein, *The Guardian***

"The biggest book of the year...an amazingly researched and well-told story."—**Matthew Rothschild, *The Progressive***

"Scahill's page-turning collection of intrigue and insight into the underworld of privatized warfare is well researched, thoroughly documented, and as a result extremely frightening."—***The Globe and Mail***

"Scahill provided me information...which I have not been able to get from the U.S. military...I have read more from Mr. Scahill, than I've got from our own government."—**Representative Marcy Kaptur, Defense Appropriations Committee**

"[T]his is no uninformed partisan screed...Meticulously documented and encyclopedic in scope...it's a comprehensive and authoritative guide...this book serves as a provocative primer for advancing the debate."—**Bill Sizemore, Pulitzer-prize nominated journalist, *Virginian-Pilot***

"Andy McNab couldn't have invented this prescient tale of the private army of mercenaries run by a Christian conservative millionaire who, in turn, bankrolls the president. A chilling exposé of the ultimate military outsource."—**Christopher Fowler, *The New Review's "Best Books of 2007"***

“Fascinating and magnificently documented...Jeremy Scahill’s new book is a brilliant exposé and belongs on the reading list of any conscientious citizen.”—**Scott Horton, International and Military Law Expert, Columbia University Law School**

About the Author

Jeremy Scahill is a frequent contributor to *The Nation* magazine and a correspondent for the national radio and TV program *Democracy Now!* He is currently a Puffin Foundation Writing Fellow at The Nation Institute. Scahill has won numerous awards for his reporting, including the prestigious George Polk Award, which he won twice. While a correspondent for *Democracy Now!*, Scahill reported extensively from Iraq through both the Clinton and Bush administrations. Traveling around the hurricane zone in the wake of Katrina, Scahill exposed the presence of Blackwater forces in New Orleans and his reporting sparked a Congressional inquiry and an internal Department of Homeland Security investigation. He has appeared on *ABC World News*, *CBS Evening News*, *NBC Nightly News*, CNN, MSNBC, PBS’s *The NewsHour*, *Bill Moyers Journal* and is a frequent guest on other radio and TV programs nationwide. Scahill also serves as an election correspondent for HBO’s *Real Time with Bill Maher*. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Frank Johnson:

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Karen Perl:

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Richard Barbosa:

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