

"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

"Scahill is rightfully concerned about the moral and policy ramifications of such a powerful and unaccountable surrogate military, let alone the effect that its forces—who are paid six-figure salaries—have on the morale of normal soldiers. But the sternest message of this book has to do with the dangers a mercenary army poses, and always has: that it can always be turned on its host."

—*Star-Ledger*

"[Scahill's] book is so scary and so illuminating."

—Bill Maher, host of HBO's Real Time

"Jeremy Scahill's account of the increasing governmental dependence on private contractors who make massive profit via death and destruction reads like a futuristic page-turner. Only he is not writing about the future; he is writing about the present, and his research is encyclopedically documented."

—*Courier-Journal*

"At Blackwater USA, Jeremy Scahill's is the face they love to hate . . . [He is] perhaps the private military company's most dogged critic."

—*Virginian-Pilot*

"Jeremy Scahill's exhaustive *Blackwater* appears with perfect timing . . . Dwight Eisenhower warned decades ago against the emergence of a military-industrial complex. Scahill sees in the rise of Blackwater the fulfillment of that dark prophecy."

—*Weekend Australian*

"Blackwater being rarely out of the news lately, this is a very useful survey of modern mercenaries—or, as they prefer to be called, 'private security contractors' in the 'peace and stability industry' . . . Scahill is a sharp investigative writer."

—*The Guardian* (London)

"It should be mandatory reading. It's very interesting—and scary."

—Scarlett Johansson, actor

"Jeremy Scahill actually doesn't know anything about Blackwater."

—Martin Strong, vice president, Blackwater Worldwide

BLACKWATER

THE RISE OF THE WORLD'S MOST
POWERFUL MERCENARY ARMY

JEREMY SCAHILL



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*For unembedded journalists, particularly Arab media workers, who risk and
often lose their lives to be the eyes and ears of the world. Without their courage
and sacrifice, history would indeed be written by self-declared victors, the rich,
and the powerful.*

stop broadcasting for a few days because every time we tried to broadcast the fighter jets spotted us [and] we became under their fire."⁴⁵

On April 12, Kimmitt, facing questions about the footage being shown on Al Jazeera depicting a civilian catastrophe in Fallujah, called on people to "Change the channel. Change the channel to a legitimate, authoritative, honest news station." Kimmitt declared, "The stations that are showing Americans intentionally killing women and children are not legitimate news sources. That is propaganda, and that is lies."⁴⁶ Dan Senor, Bremer's senior adviser, asserted that Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya "are misreporting facts on the ground and contributing to a sense of anger and frustration that possibly should be directed at individuals and organizations inside of Fallujah that mutilate Americans and slaughter other Iraqis rather than at the Coalition."⁴⁷ On April 15 Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld echoed those remarks in still harsher terms, calling Al Jazeera's reporting "vicious, inaccurate and inexcusable."⁴⁸ A reporter asked Rumsfeld if the United States had a "civilian casualty" count. "Of course not," Rumsfeld shot back. "We're not in the city. But you know what our forces do; they don't go around killing hundreds of civilians. . . . It's disgraceful what that station is doing."⁴⁹ It was the very next day, according to a British government memo stamped "Top Secret" reported on in Britain's *Daily Mirror*, that President Bush allegedly told British Prime Minister Tony Blair of his desire to bomb Al Jazeera.⁵⁰ "He made clear he wanted to bomb al-Jazeera in Qatar and elsewhere," a source told the *Mirror*. "There's no doubt what Bush wanted to do."⁵¹ Ahmed Mansour said he believed that what Al Jazeera was providing in its reports from inside Fallujah was balance to a story that otherwise was being told exclusively from the vantage point of embedded correspondents and U.S. military spokespeople. "Is it professionalism that the journalists wear U.S. [military] clothing and they go with them in the planes and tanks to cover this and report this?" Mansour asked. "The battles have to be reported from both sides. We were among the civilians, and we reported, and they had embedded journalists with those who launched this attack from the U.S. forces who occupied Iraq,

and they reported what they wanted. We were trying to create an equilibrium or a balance, so that the truth is not lost."⁵²

Collective Punishment

The horrors unfolding in Fallujah, coupled with the U.S. failure to take control of the city and the bold resistance of Fallujah's residents, was encouraging other Iraqis to rise up. As the siege went on, people from across Iraq began coming to Fallujah to help in the defense of the city. "The battle of Fallujah is the battle of history, the battle of Iraq, the battle of the nation," Harth al-Dhari, of the Muslim Scholars Association, told thousands of worshipers at Friday prayers in the midst of the siege. "Merciful God, take revenge for spilled blood. Take revenge for slaughter. Send your army against the occupiers. Kill all of them. Don't spare any of them."⁵³ By the time what U.S. officials called a "cease-fire" had set in the weekend of April 9, some thirty Marines had been killed. But it was Iraqis who paid the highest price. After the weeklong U.S. siege, some six hundred were dead in Fallujah, among them "hundreds of women and children."⁵⁴ On April 13, President Bush delivered a prime-time address on national television in the United States. "Terrorists from other countries have infiltrated Iraq to incite and organize attacks," Bush declared from the East Room of the White House. "The violence we have seen is a power grab by these extreme and ruthless elements . . . it's not a popular uprising."⁵⁵

But half a world away, as thousands of Fallujans escaped their city and fled to other parts of Iraq, they brought with them tales of horror and civilian death that no amount of propaganda could combat. Despite U.S. rhetoric about liberating Fallujah from "foreign fighters" and Baathists, it was not lost on Iraqis that the stated justification for the destruction of Fallujah and the deaths of hundreds of people was the killing of four U.S. mercenaries—seen by most Iraqis as the real foreign fighters. "For only four individuals, the Americans killed children, women, elderly, and now a whole city is under siege?" asked Haitham Saha, while at a Baghdad dropoff point for humanitarian supplies to Fallujah.⁵⁶ "We know who the people were who killed the American contractors," a cleric at a local mosque told a reporter.