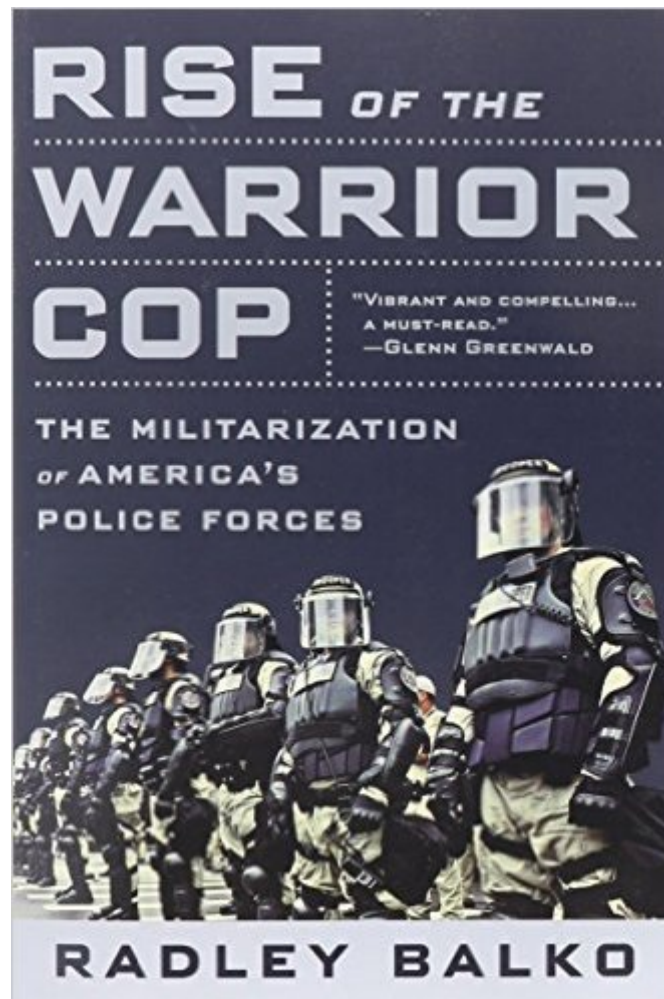


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Rise Of The Warrior Cop: The Militarization Of America's Police Forces



Synopsis

The last days of colonialism taught America's revolutionaries that soldiers in the streets bring conflict and tyranny. As a result, our country has generally worked to keep the military out of law enforcement. But according to investigative reporter Radley Balko, over the last several decades, America's cops have increasingly come to resemble ground troops. The consequences have been dire: the home is no longer a place of sanctuary, the Fourth Amendment has been gutted, and police today have been conditioned to see the citizens they serve as an enemy. Today's armored-up policemen are a far cry from the constables of early America. The unrest of the 1960s brought about the invention of the SWAT unit; which in turn led to the debut of military tactics in the ranks of police officers. Nixon's War on Drugs, Reagan's War on Poverty, Clinton's COPS program, the post-9/11 security state under Bush and Obama: by degrees, each of these innovations expanded and empowered police forces, always at the expense of civil liberties. And these are just four among a slew of reckless programs. In *Rise of the Warrior Cop*, Balko shows how politicians' ill-considered policies and relentless declarations of war against vague enemies like crime, drugs, and terror have blurred the distinction between cop and soldier. His fascinating, frightening narrative shows how over a generation, a creeping battlefield mentality has isolated and alienated American police officers and put them on a collision course with the values of a free society.

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Customer Reviews

Chances are somewhere in America today, a SWAT team will arrive at a private residence. They'll throw flash-bang grenades and kick in the door; they'll force occupants to the floor at gunpoint and start tearing the place apart. They're will be profanity and screaming. They may kill the family dog, pitbull or poodle. And if they don't find anything, or it turns out they came to the wrong address, too bad. You're not going to get an apology. This is the state of policing in America in 2013, says Radley Balko in his new book "Rise of the Warrior Cop." Across the country, law enforcement is turning to SWAT team and other specialized units not for their original purpose of providing rapid response to hostage situations and standoffs, but to serve drug warrants, enforce regulatory issues, and quell political dissent. Police are rapidly accumulating military weapons, armored vehicles, military-style uniforms and an "us against them" attitude that has resulted in wrongful arrests, property damage, injuries, and even deaths. While many people have become aware of the militarization of law enforcement since 2001, Balko shows this process began in earnest about 40 years ago, when Richard Nixon decided to exploit the white, middle-class Silent Majority's fears of increasing drug use and crime. The "drug war" and now the "war on terror" has led to a steady erosion of our Fourth Amendment rights against unreasonable search and seizure and the "Castle Doctrine," the idea that we are safe from government intrusion in our homes without serious cause. Balko traces this history from the roots of the Castle Doctrine in British common law right up into the present day.

For those of us who have followed Radley Balko on his old blog, 'The Agitator', and in his new position as Senior Writer and Investigative Reporter at The Huffington Post, this book is a culmination of some of his best writing. The Rise of the Warrior Cop, was seen up close and personal in the aftermath of the Boston Marathon Bombing. Hundreds of police from all across New England converged in Watertown, Mass., to hunt for the Marathon Bomber. The city under total lockdown, with these heavily armed policemen with all manner of armored vehicles racing down the streets, police knocking on doors, hunting in trash cans, gave the television viewer a sense of déjà vu. To the average citizen, we were OK with the police hunting down the criminals, giving up a twenty four hour period of our lives, to stay in doors under lockdown, while they went about their business. It wasn't until the guns started firing, cross fire between the police and the fugitives, bullets entering homes, breaking glass, with horrified citizens looking on. No, citizen was injured, which seems a miracle considering the amount of ammunition used. Is this the future of policing? Radley Balko gives us the background of policing. The real militarization of the police. Once the wars wore down, the old and new equipment no longer needed by the military was given to the local police.. Large cities, New York, LA, benefitted first, then it spread out to the rest of the

country. Drug raids now take place with armored transports, SWAT teams heavily armed, break into homes with wrong addresses, shooting dogs, harassing the citizenry, all done under the guise of good policing. Innocent people are dying, families split, and often no apology coming from the police.

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