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“As far as I can tell, Bernard Harcourt has never had an uninteresting thought.”

—**Malcolm Gladwell**

“Bernard Harcourt has written a brilliant and disturbing book, which shows that James Madison was right when he said that ‘no nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare.’ *The Counterrevolution* make a compelling case that the U.S. government is employing the same strategies and weapons that it uses to fight its endless wars abroad to deal with imagined enemies on the home front. This book should be required reading for every American.”

—**John J. Mearsheimer, University of Chicago**

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CONTACT: Carrie Majer

212-364-0665 / carrie.majer@hbgusa.com

THE COUNTERREVOLUTION

How Our Government Went to War Against Its Own Citizens

BERNARD E. HARCOURT

In the early morning hours of Friday, July 8, 2016, the Dallas Police Department cornered an army veteran named Micah Johnson who was believed to have shot and killed five police officers and wounded several others at a peaceful protest against police violence. Johnson, thought to be armed with explosives, exchanged gunfire with the officers. As the standoff wore on, the police chief changed tactics: the officers attached an explosive device to the arm of a robot and sent the robot in Johnson’s direction. When it got close, police detonated the bomb, killing Johnson. He was an “ordinary” criminal suspect believed to have committed multiple common-law felony homicides, and yet, in activating the robot bomb, the Dallas police used a lethal drone in a civilian context on American soil.

The robot bombing in Dallas is just one of many examples of a disturbing rise of military hardware and counterinsurgency strategies used on ordinary Americans. We’ve seen a hyper militarized police force during peaceful protests such as Ferguson, drone strikes outside conventional war zones, total NSA surveillance, and the secret infiltration of American mosques and Muslim student groups without any evidence of wrongdoing. These are not isolated incidents. They are not improvised or unrelated excesses. And they do not appear to be temporary.

In **THE COUNTERREVOLUTION: *How Our Government Went to War against Its Own Citizens*** (Basic Books, February 27, 2018), political theorist and legal scholar Bernard E. Harcourt argues that the United States has turned the techniques of counterinsurgency on its own people. He describes counterinsurgency as the combination of three elements: (1) bulk collection of intelligence, (2) ruthless eradication of the “active minority” of the population that is hostile to the governing regime, and (3) the pacification of the rest of the populace. And he traces the development of these counterinsurgency methods now used by US government domestically. From the refinement of counterinsurgency practices in the 1950s and 60s during the decolonization wars in Asia and Africa, to its deployment in Iraq and Afghanistan after 9/11, to its domestication and use on American soil, and finally to a counterinsurgency model of governing in the very absence of any domestic insurrection—The Counterrevolution.

Harcourt points out that one of the “greatest tragedies” is that many Americans are either perfectly comfortable or actively embrace the Counterrevolution. We saw this in the 2016 U.S. presidential election when Donald Trump won over sixty-two million votes despite (or because of) his campaign endorsements of waterboarding, indefinite detention of American suspects at Guantanamo, and the travel ban on Muslims. **THE COUNTERREVOLUTION** shows us that counterinsurgency methods used by our government on U.S. soil generates a narrative of insurrection in our country that can transform whole neighborhoods and groups—American Muslims or Mexicans, African Americans or peaceful protesters—into suspected insurgents. As Trump claimed in an interview, “certain things will be done that we never thought would happen in this country in terms of information and learning about the enemy.... We’re going to have to do things that were frankly unthinkable a year ago.” It is clear that The Counterrevolution has arrived, and will perhaps grow to be more brutal. With what is at stake, Harcourt warns that we “need to examine it more closely to understand fully how it functions and how to resist it.”

Strategies originally developed to combat colonial rebellions—bulk intelligence collection, ruthless targeting of minority groups, propaganda to pacify the masses—have, frighteningly, become a new paradigm of domestic governance. An incisive work of historical analysis and political critique, **THE COUNTERREVOLUTION** raises profound and disturbing questions about the power of our government over us, and about the increasingly violent and repressive form that power takes.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Bernard E. Harcourt is the Isidor and Seville Sulzbacher Professor of Law and Professor of Political Science at Columbia University. The author of several books, including *The Illusion of Free Markets* and *Exposed*, he lives in New York City.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

THE COUNTERREVOLUTION

How Our Government Went to War Against Its Own Citizens

By Bernard E. Harcourt

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Advance Praise for
THE COUNTERREVOLUTION
How Our Government Went to War Against Its Own Citizens
BERNARD E. HARCOURT
(Basic Books, February 27, 2018)

“Shattering any notion that the current state of American politics, or today’s uglier practices of exclusion and repression, are either new or temporary, Bernard Harcourt’s *The Counterrevolution* is searing and indispensable. From this richly researched and powerfully argued account, we come to appreciate the full depth and scope of the crisis we now face in our country. Harcourt’s analysis is brutal and clear: if we don’t fully grasp just how totally our democracy is now compromised, we might never rescue it.”

—**Heather Ann Thompson, Pulitzer Prize –winning author of *Blood in the Water: The Attica Prison Uprising of 1971 and its Legacy***

“Bernard Harcourt’s *The Counterrevolution* offers a masterful look into the deeper logic and long-term consequences of the systemic changes that took place in the United States in the name of the war on terror. Harcourt brilliantly recasts the premises, the terminology, and the consequences of post-9/11 policies of surveillance, detention, torture, and targeted killings in a way that is bound to transform our understanding of our times and to inspire new means of protest and counter-action. *The Counterrevolution* will no doubt become a must-read for any student of the era.”

—**Karen J. Greenberg, author of *Rogue Justice: The Making of the Security State* and editor of *The Torture Papers: The Road to Abu Ghraib***

“Bernard Harcourt has written a brilliant and disturbing book, which shows that James Madison was right when he said that ‘no nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare.’ *The Counterrevolution* make a compelling case that the U.S. government is employing the same strategies and weapons that it uses to fight its endless wars abroad to deal with imagined enemies on the home front. This book should be required reading for every American.”

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“I’m not on board with the premise, and I found something to disagree with on nearly every page, but make no mistake: *The Counterrevolution* is an important and deeply challenging book. It should be mandatory for anyone who cares about the future of the Republic, especially to challenge those who want to believe, as I do, that we aren’t doomed.”

—**Noah Feldman, author of *The Three Lives of James Madison: Genius, Partisan, President***

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