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“One of those rare books that will be discussed and debated for many decades.”
—William Julius Wilson, author of *The Truly Disadvantaged*

THE COLOR OF LAW

*A Forgotten History of How Our Government
Segregated America*

Richard Rothstein

“This indictment of government-sponsored segregation is a timely work that will find broad readership among those asking ‘How did we arrive here?’ and ‘What next?’”
—★*Library Journal* (starred review)

“Comprehensive and engrossing... This compassionate and scholarly diagnosis of past policies and prescription for our current racial maladies shines a bright light on some shadowy spaces.”
—★*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

“Essential reading... A timely work that should find a place in the current national discussion.”
—*Booklist*

“A hard-hitting argument condemning federal, state, and local governments for devising laws that enforce segregation... An informed, important exposé of the nation's institutionalized racism.”
—*Kirkus Reviews*

In *THE COLOR OF LAW*, Richard Rothstein argues with exacting precision and fascinating insight how segregation in America—the incessant kind that continues to dog our major cities and has contributed to so much recent social strife—is the byproduct of explicit government policies at the local, state, and federal level.

To scholars and social critics, racism in our neighborhoods has long been viewed as a manifestation of unscrupulous real estate agents, unethical mortgage lenders, and exclusionary covenants working outside the law. This is what is commonly known as “*de facto* segregated,” practices that were the outcome of private, not legal or public policy, means. Yet, as Rothstein breaks down in case after case, until the last quarter of the twentieth century *de facto* paled in comparison to *de jure* (government-sponsored) segregation.

A former columnist for the *New York Times* and a research associate at the Economic Policy Institute, as well as a Fellow at the Thurgood Marshall Institute of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Rothstein has spent years documenting the evidence that government not merely ignored discriminatory practices in the residential sphere, but *promoted* them. The impact has been devastating for generations of African-Americans who were denied the right to live where they wanted to live, and raise and school their children where they thought best.

While the Fair Housing Act in 1968 provided modest enforcement to prevent future discrimination, it did nothing to reverse or undo a century’s worth of state-sanctioned violations of the Bill of Rights, particularly the Thirteenth Amendment which banned treating former slaves as second-class citizens. So the structural conditions established by 20th century federal policy endure to this day.

At every step of the way, Rothstein demonstrates, the government and our courts upheld racist policies to maintain the separation of whites and blacks. Leading to the powder keg which has defined Ferguson, Baltimore, Charleston, and Chicago. *THE COLOR OF LAW* is not a tale of Red versus Blue states. It is sadly the story of America in all of its municipalities, large and small, liberal and reactionary.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Richard Rothstein is a research associate of the Economic Policy Institute and a Fellow at the Thurgood Marshall Institute of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. He lives in California, where is a Fellow of the Haas Institute at the University of California–Berkeley.

TITLE: *THE COLOR OF LAW: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*

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