



13 Days in Ferguson

Ron Johnson

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13 Days in Ferguson is a nuanced, honest examination of race, duty, and spirituality.

Captain Ronald Johnson was in charge of the police force in Ferguson, Missouri, during the upset following Michael Brown's murder, the incident that sparked several days of protests and riots. Johnson reconciles his occupation as an officer and his identity as a black man as he grapples with internal demons. Though it sometimes delves into clichés, this is an eye-opening look at both sides of the conflict.

Michael Brown's unarmed body was left in the street for hours after he was shot by an unnamed cop. His neighborhood erupted in justified rage, taking to the streets to protest. The governor called in Johnson, who was serving with the Missouri State Highway Patrol, to deescalate things. Regardless of which side he was on, Johnson knew he had a responsibility to serve his community to the best of his ability.

13 Days in Ferguson details the thirteen days of riots, protests, and marches that saturated Ferguson after Brown's death. Johnson provides a brutally honest excavation of his thought processes during the time. On one hand, he knows all too well the racism present in America, instances of which are shown clearly in the text. On the other, he's been a member of the police force all his life, and believes in its mission.

Johnson's account adds much-needed nuance to the debate around police brutality. Vivid scenes of the chaos in Ferguson include tangible details and emotions. The book also explores Johnson's life outside of these events, adding more layers to his story and his position. Moments of catharsis fill the book, as when a black officer and a white officer hug and cry together. At times, though, the text falls into platitude, waxing poetic about the wonders faith can do for a community.

13 Days in Ferguson is a genuine, brutal observation of an important period.

MYA ALEXICE (July/August 2018)

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