Clarion Review

Autobiography & Memoir

41 D-Man of Valor: The Story of SWAT Officer Randy Simmons
Lisa Simmons
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Five Stars (out of Five)

Thousands of people mourned the death of SWAT officer Randy Simmons, who was killed during a hostage rescue mission. A twenty-seven-year veteran of the Los Angeles Police Department, he was the first Los Angeles SWAT team member killed in the line of duty. He was the consummate officer, always ready to put his life on the line. A dedicated officer to the end, Randy Simmons was also much more.

Four years after his death, his widow, Lisa Simmons, has published his biography, *41 D-Man of Valor: The Story of SWAT Officer Randy Simmons*. Lovingly and proudly presented, the book details this very special man's life and pays tribute to him. Simmons writes casually, as if speaking to a friend, with the occasional grammatical lapse. Her tale is a heady one that she is anxious to share; it is the stuff of made-for-TV movies.

Simmons has taken a long time to work through the issues of her husband's death, and writing his biography was clearly a painful process. "Our memories allow us to live in a given moment even when it's just for a matter of seconds," she observes, finding at least some small consolation in having those memories. Hers was a strong and happy marriage, and Randy put his wife and two children ahead of everything else, including the LAPD. "Only soul mates could run our race, endure our active lifestyle, and remain married," she writes. It is clear that she finds inspiration in both her husband's life and his death.

A minister's son, Randy was a devout Christian who "promised God that he would get his life right and serve Him totally." It was not an empty promise, according to Simmons. Randy had a profound effect on many, both within the force and on the streets in the roughest parts of Los Angeles. Lisa describes him as "a master at sharing the gospel without sounding like a religious fanatic," adding that "everyone knew he was a man of faith." Fellow officers often were astounded to find him counseling gang members, street criminals, and drug addicts on

changing their ways. His greatest mission was the Glory Kids Ministry, a community outreach program he established for children in the toughest crime areas of the city. Serving as a role model, Randy visited several neighborhoods every single Saturday, calling the kids together for "an edifying lesson and fun." Both children and their parents looked forward to his weekly visits.

While Simmons does glorify her husband's life, she also makes clear that Randy Simmons was a very special person. However readers may feel about Randy's Christianity or the author's unrestrained admiration for him and his good deeds, Officer Simmons was unmistakably a good man and a good cop. His story is inspiring.

Cheryl Hibbard