

Black Lives Matter. By Sue Edwards and Duchess Harris. Minneapolis: Adobo Publishing, 2016. 112 pp., \$32.23 Cloth.

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In the age of social media's 140-character manifestos, scholarly competencies may soon include the ability to present scholarship acceptable to the academy, yet digestible by the broader public. In *Black Lives Matter*, Sue Bradford Edwards and Duchess Harris have set a new gold standard for such publicly accessible, but rigorous scholarship, in an account of the police brutality and extrajudicial killings, which inspired organic forms of resistance and ultimately laid the groundwork for the Black Lives Matter movement.

Although some might view this text as meant for young adults, I strongly recommend *Black Lives Matter* for classroom use at a collegiate level. Its accessible wording is deployed effectively to express complex ideas, in ways which even practiced learners will find useful. Dynamic illustrations, including many photographs, as well rich political content, can inform and engage students of many ages and skill levels.

Edwards and Harris use historical accounts, public records, and evocative prose, to describe the relationship between state sanctioned violence and the Black community. They reconstruct key events while providing pertinent elucidations and scholarly content to aid the reader's understanding of each case. They illuminate the Black community's long-held mistrust of law enforcement, in light of the well-documented history of abuses experienced by Black citizens (see Nunnally's, *Trust in Black America: Race, Discrimination, and Politics*, NYU Press, 2012).

Chapter 1, "Michael Brown and Ferguson" is a harrowing account of the circumstances and controversy surrounding Brown's death. The authors follow the timeline from the original shooting on August 9 2014, to prosecuting Attorney Robert McCulloch's November 24 announcement that the grand jury would not indict Darren Wilson, the officer who killed the unarmed Black teenager. Highlighting the emotional turmoil Brown's family endured, Edwards and Harris observe that on the night of the announcement, "Louis Head, Brown's stepfather, comforted Brown's

mother and then yelled out to the crowd to burn down the city” (p. 17). Throughout the investigation and even earlier on the day of the announcement, Brown’s family had advocated for peaceful protest. When justice was not served, all that remained was a void where the rule of law once dwelled.

In Chapter 2, “Black Lives in America,” Edwards and Harris examine a long train of racial abuse via the American legal system. This chapter highlights Black responses to unrelenting domination and oppression, via civil disobedience. Invoking Black leaders such as A. Phillip Randolph, Martin Luther King, Jr., and El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (Malcolm X) the authors explain why historical leaders still stand as exemplars for organizing mass demonstration. Chapters 3 and 4 detail events surrounding the killing of Oscar Grant in Oakland and document how people of color are disproportionately plagued by “Unequal Justice” in the implementation of the law. Less than a week after Grant’s murder, over 500 protesters, faced with a militarized police response, answered in kind. Edwards and Harris contend that “Citizens had clearly lost faith in the police authorities” (p. 40). Chapter 4 explores how Blacks have been disproportionately and unfairly targeted by supposedly race neutral policies in the legal system, seen clearly in sentencing disparities and the “crib to prison pipeline.” Protest then serves as a tool of resistance and means by which Black Americans voices can be heard.

Chapter 5, “Trayvon Martin,” recounts the events of February 26 2012. On that night, Florida neighborhoods watch Captain George Zimmerman murdered 17-year old Martin. Martin’s hoodie, a can of Arizona ice tea, and a bag of skittles made him appear to Zimmerman as if “he’s up to no good or he was on drugs,” and that “something’s wrong with him” (p. 58). Ultimately, it took 2.25 million people, in 34 high school walkouts and innumerable protests, to pressure the police to file charges. Nationwide protests in reaction to Zimmerman’s acquittal, attributed to “unstable” testimony, were massive. According to the authors, a resounding 5 million tweets were posted within 26 hours. One tweet by Patrisse Cullors, with the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter, would not only express “the fact that these people and their lives mattered,” but also be the catalyst for a new wave of social movements (p. 67). Edwards and Harris argue that the killings of Brown and Martin directly motivated Cullors, Alicia Garza, and Opal Tometi to organize a social movement against discrimination and police brutality, affirming that Black lives do indeed matter.

Chapter 6 traces the militarization of U.S. police forces. Edwards and Harris argue that Police departments upgraded their weaponry and

tactics as a response to Black citizens throwing objects like bricks, stone, and bottles—as deliberate acts of resistance. The writers attribute the expansion of militarized policing to the Defense Department’s 1033 Program, initiated in 1997 to share surplus military equipment with local police. Similarly, SWAT (Special Weapons And Tactics) team training socialized officers to “enter interactions with the public with high expectation of violence” (p. 77). Aggressive policing practices and a mentality of “Us versus Them” saturate media images and frame Black citizens as a constant threat to law and order.

Edwards and Harris conclude the book with evidence that resistance by citizens has achieved incremental change, even as violence against black bodies grows exponentially. Renisha McBride, a Black teenager seeking help after a 2013 car crash in a Detroit suburb, was gunned down by white homeowner Theodore Wafer, setting off nationwide protests; the shooter was convicted and sentenced to 17 years in prison. Likewise, citizens “Calling for Change” was a key impetus for the U.S. Justice Department’s investigation of the Ferguson police department. The investigation found “a pattern of civil rights violations” that had eroded community trust. In its highest-profile consequence, the Black Lives Matter movement, using new forms of activism rooted in social media, helped spark creation of the Obama administration’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing. Yet, police and extrajudicial killings continue, and the list of the dead lengthens (e.g. Tony Robinson, Sandra Bland, Freddie Gray), making books like this, designed to reach the broadest possible audience, more crucial than ever. *Black Lives Matter* is highly recommended.

Sisters in the Statehouse: Black Women & Legislative Decision Making.
Edited By Nadia E. Brown. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. 272 pp., \$53.00 Cloth

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Nearly 100 years after Hiram Revels became the first Black man elected to the U.S. Senate and 30 years after Crystal Dreda Bird Fauset became the