



Will You Die with Me?: My Life and the Black Panther Party

By Flores Alexander Forbes

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Will You Die with Me?: My Life and the Black Panther Party By Flores Alexander Forbes

Amid the social turmoil of the 1960s and ,70s, a young man in California found his purpose in the rise of the Black Panther Party, made a deadly mistake that cost him his freedom, and ultimately got his life back, having learned the true lessons of the Buddha Samurai.

By the time Flores Forbes was twenty-five years old, he had just a GED and sixty college credits to his name. But he had gone far in his chosen profession as a revolutionary. In 1977, Forbes had been in the Black Panther Party for almost a decade and had become the youngest member of the organization's central committee. In this remarkable memoir, Forbes vividly describes his transformation from an angry youth into a powerful partisan in the ranks of the black liberation movement. Disillusioned in high school by the racism in his native San Diego, he began reading Black Panther literature. Drawn to the Panthers' mission of organizing resistance to police brutality, he eagerly joined and soon found himself immersed in a culture of Mao-inspired rigor. His dedication ultimately earned him a place in the Party's elite inner circle as assistant chief of staff, charged with heading up the "fold" -- the heavily armed military branch dubbed by Huey P. Newton the "Buddha Samurai." "My job was one of the most secretive in the party," writes Forbes, "and to this day most of the people who were in the Party over the years had not a clue as to what I really did..."

With intimate portraits of such BPP leaders as Elaine Brown, Eldridge Cleaver, and Huey P. Newton, *Will You Die with Me?* is a riveting firsthand look at some of the most dramatic events of the last century and a brutally honest tale of one man's journey from rage to redemption.

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Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Forbes wasn't the first 16-year-old boy to be smitten by the romance of revolution, but he is among the handful in recent American history who became top-ranking members of the Black Panther Party. His autobiography reads like a modern-day *Crime and Punishment*, tracking Forbes's evolution from a comrade who thought he could "do almost anything" to achieve a revolutionary objective to a prisoner in existential crisis. Unlike Dostoyevski's protagonist, Forbes does not generally regret his past, but reproaches himself for his vulnerability to "years of ideological and philosophical conditioning," despite the worthiness of the Panther cause. A survivor above all, Forbes straddles passion and cynicism with equanimity, and is as willing to demythologize major figures as he is to canonize them. He treats Huey P. Newton with particular subtlety, alternately revering the Black Panther founder and cult hero as a genius of realpolitik and criticizing him as a cocaine-snorting, iron-fisted gangster. When Newton is accused of murdering a 17-year-old prostitute and Forbes risks assassinating the star witness to save him, one realizes that Forbes's story is really a case study of power's allure and attendant moral compromise, no matter how righteous its origin. Photos. (July)

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From School Library Journal

Adult/High School—Forbes joined the Black Panther Party as a 16-year-old in 1968. Within eight years, he had become a member of the inner circle that gave him access to cofounder Huey Newton. During the following 10 years, Forbes made a tactical error that killed a close friend and turned him into a fugitive before returning to California to face sentencing. During the past 20 years, he has completed college and graduate school, and has worked as an urban planner and small-business developer. Less scholarly than David Hilliard and Lewis Cole's *This Side of Glory* (Chicago Review, 2001), but no less authentic and insightful, this book intertwines the author's life story with aspects of the Black Panthers' development and denouement, using street talk that both befits Forbes's youth and makes his story a compelling nonfiction read for teens with a taste for urban fiction. The author portrays himself as analytical and thirsty for ideas even at a time when he spent his days drinking and smoking pot, and his nights protecting Oakland and Berkeley neighborhoods against incursion by non-BPP gangs. Two dozen photos are included, and a chronology provides a larger historical context for the time period. Rough language will keep this title from some school library shelves, but students will find it a valuable research tool and, for some, welcome leisure reading.—Francisca Goldsmith, Berkeley Public Library, CA

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Review

"[A] blistering account...in lean, aggressive prose, shifting seamlessly between articulate circumspection and the hard-edged slang of his characters." - *San Francisco Chronicle*

"In unparalleled detail, we are given the inside story...The case [Forbes's] book makes against the Black Panther legend [is] hard to dismiss." - *The New York Times Book Review*

"Reads like a modern-day *Crime and Punishment*" - *Publishers Weekly*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

William Jimenes:

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Michael Davis:

Reading a guide tends to be new life style with this era globalization. With looking at you can get a lot of information that will give you benefit in your life. Together with book everyone in this world can share their idea. Textbooks can also inspire a lot of people. A lot of author can inspire all their reader with their story or perhaps their experience. Not only the story that share in the ebooks. But also they write about the information about something that you need illustration. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your young ones, there are many kinds of book that you can get now. The authors on earth always try to improve their expertise in writing, they also doing some exploration before they write with their book. One of them is this Will You Die with Me?: My Life and the Black Panther Party.

Maria Smith:

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