

NewSouth Books

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Closed Ranks: The Whitehurst Case in Post-Civil Rights Montgomery examines the little-known story of a 1975 police shooting of an unarmed black man

Montgomery, Ala.: The 1975 shooting of Bernard Whitehurst, an unarmed black man mistaken by Montgomery police for a robbery suspect, led to a year-long controversy that resulted in the resignation or firing of police officers, the police chief, and the city's popular New South mayor, and drew national attention. On the day of the shooting, police claimed that Whitehurst had fired on the pursuing officer and produced a weapon they claimed was found near his body. Investigations by a private attorney, the local district attorney, and the *Montgomery Advertiser* uncovered facts pointing to wrongdoing by the police. Yet no one was ever convicted in Whitehurst's death, and his family's civil lawsuit against the City of Montgomery failed.

Now, more than four decades later, author Foster Dickson makes a study of what is now a long-forgotten story, one riddled with incompatible narratives. *Closed Ranks* brings together interviews, police reports, news stories, and other records to carry the reader through the fraught post-civil rights movement period when the shooting of Bernard Whitehurst Jr. occurred. In our current time, as police shootings regularly dominate news cycles, this book shows how essential it is to find and face the truth in such tragic situations. Black lives do matter. But as *Closed Ranks* forces us to consider, the question of what justice looks like can be difficult to answer.

Foster Dickson is a writer, editor, and award-winning teacher who lives in Montgomery, Alabama. His work has centered mainly on subjects related to the American South, multiculturalism, education, and social justice. Dickson's books include *I Just Make People Up: Rambling with Clark Walker* (2009) and *Children of the Changing South* (2011), and his shorter works have appeared in *Calaloo*, *Evergreen Review*, and the *Encyclopedia of Alabama*.

Closed Ranks will be available in October through your favorite local or online retailer. Retailers, contact Ingram Publisher Services (IPS) at 866-400-5351 or by email at ips@ingramcontent.com, or order via ipage.ingrambook.com. Trade Paper; ISBN: 978-1-58838-362-8; 272 pages; \$21.95.