

This Nonviolent Stuff'll Get You Killed: How Guns Made the Civil Rights Movement Possible

Charles E. Cobb Jr.



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Visiting Martin Luther King, Jr. at the peak of the civil rights movement, the journalist William Worthy almost sat on a loaded pistol. "Just for self-defense," King assured him. One of King's advisors remembered the reverend's home as "an arsenal." Like King, many nonviolent activists embraced their constitutional right to self-protection—yet this crucial dimension of the civil rights struggle has been long ignored.

In *This Nonviolent Stuff'll Get You Killed*, civil rights scholar Charles E. Cobb, Jr. reveals how nonviolent activists and their allies kept the civil rights movement alive by bearing—and, when necessary, using—firearms. Whether patrolling their neighborhoods, garrisoning their homes, or firing back at attackers, these men and women were crucial to the movement's success, as were the weapons they carried. Drawing on his firsthand experiences in the Southern Freedom Movement and interviews with fellow participants, Cobb offers a controversial examination of the vital role guns have played in securing American liberties.



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