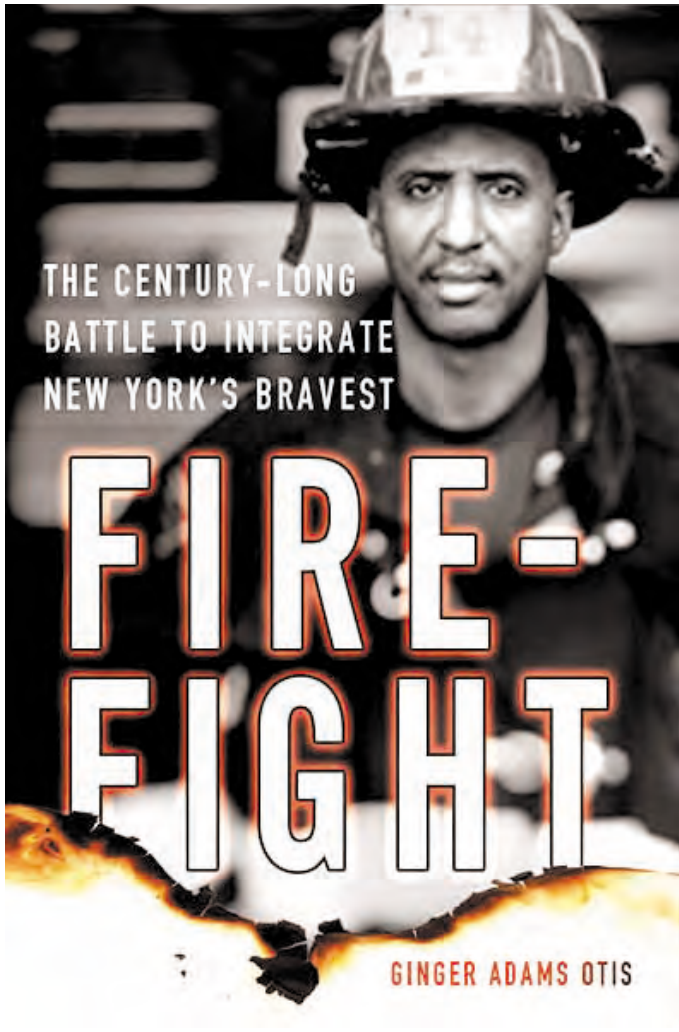


THE INNER-CITY NEWS

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**United Haven: New Haven's Faith Community
Stands With Mother Emanuel AME, Charleston SC**



**Whalley, Edgewood Neighbors
Press For Dirt-Bike Relief**



FIREFIGHT: The Century-Long Battle to Integrate New York

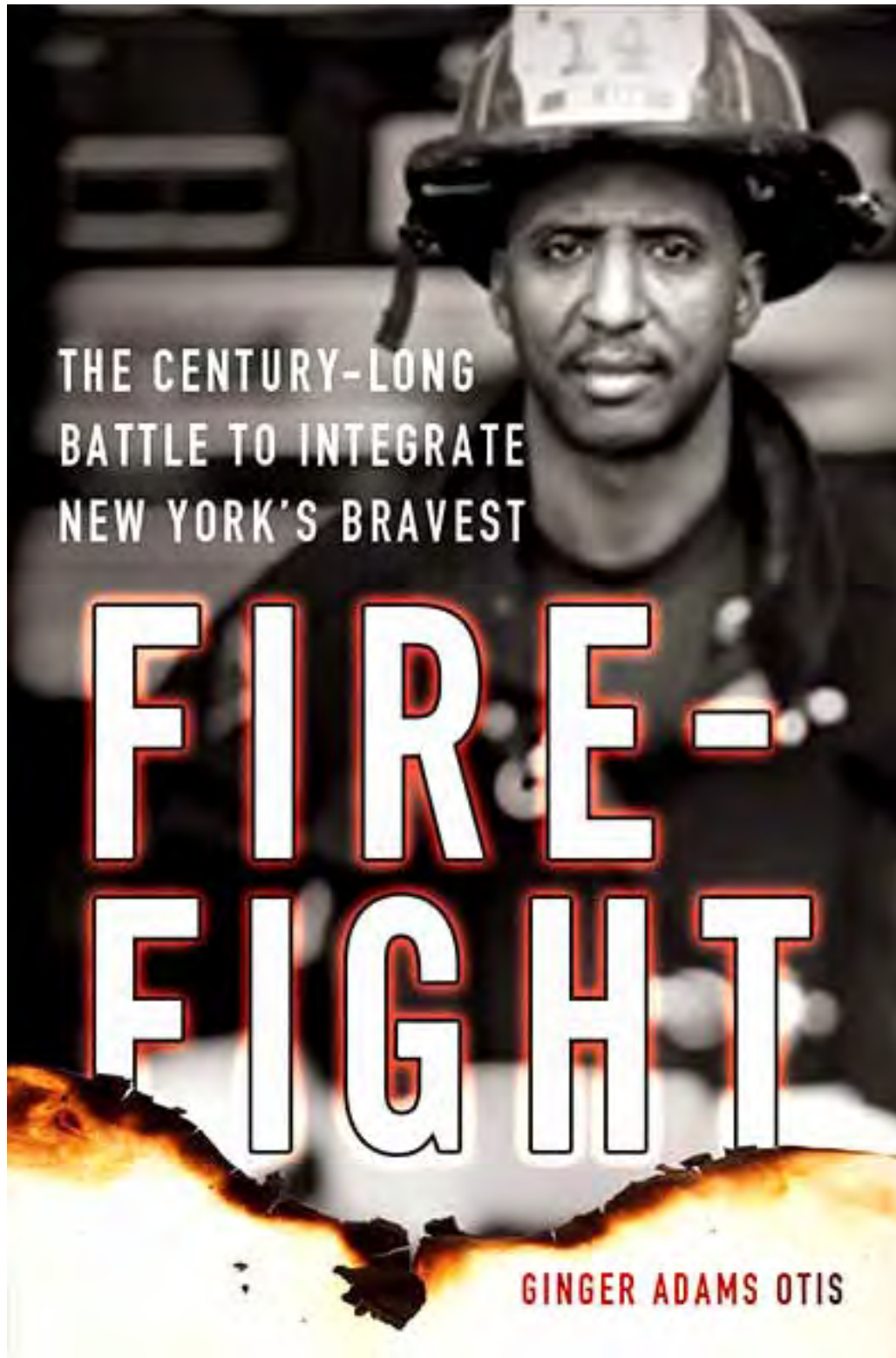
Narrative from veteran reporter Ginger Adams Otis

As racial unrest gripped the nation last summer after a white cop fatally shot an unarmed black teen in Ferguson, Missouri, a startling fact emerged from the chaos: the Ferguson police department had only three black officers out of a force of 50, serving a city that's 67% African-American.

As the controversy surrounding race and police use of force escalated into a widespread protest movement, the question of who gets to hold the civil service jobs that define and defend communities took on new urgency. But in New York, it wasn't a new issue at all. In fact, for the past 150 years, the city has been served by a fire department that was almost entirely white and male – until a determined group of black activist firefighters filed a civil rights lawsuit to break the color barrier.

FIREFIGHT: The Century-Long Battle to Integrate New York's Bravest (Palgrave MacMillan; Hardcover; Pub Date 5/26/2015; ISBN 978-1-137-28001-5; \$28.00) is a powerful narrative from veteran reporter Ginger Adams Otis that delves deep into the struggle of black firefighters to truly integrate the FDNY – the largest fire department in the U.S. It sheds light on the long, painful effort to achieve the still-elusive "post-racial" America and shares the untold history of the black men and women who battled to join the Bravest.

Based on nearly 10 years of reporting and interviews with firefighters, **FIREFIGHT** brings to life the historical and modern challenges that kept the doors of New York City firehouses closed to blacks — and women and Latinos too. The searing story touches on the earliest struggles of pioneering



blacks who had to eat and sleep apart from their mostly-Irish brothers, and explores the inner-workings of the City Hall politics that brought the federal Department of Justice to NYC —

and finally forced the issue into the courts. **FIREFIGHT** reveals:

Vivid accounts of Wesley Williams, one of the first blacks to join the FDNY in 1919, a

pariah in his Little Italy firehouse but a hero in Harlem. His incredible narrative showcases the African-American determination to move beyond slavery, and the refusal of north-

ern blacks to be "Jim Crowed."

The private skirmishes between Mayor Bloomberg, FDNY top brass and FDNY Capt. Paul Washington, a second-generation black firefighter who dedicated his 25-year career to getting more applicants of color on the job.

Insider details on why the Bloomberg administration took the case to trial, even knowing that with 300 black firefighters out of a force of 11,000 – less than 3% – the city was almost certain to lose. When it did, the cost to taxpayers was nearly \$100 million – all for a lawsuit Bloomberg could have settled for nothing.

A careful exploration of the supposedly unbiased civil service testing system designed more than 100 years ago, and the competition and infighting between city agencies that allowed it to fall woefully behind the times.

An intimate look at life inside firehouse walls, the friendships and betrayals that have strained and inflamed firefighter bonds, along with high-energy tales of survival doing one of the world's most dangerous jobs.

The legacy of the Vulcan Society, the fraternal organization of black firefighters born out of Wesley Williams' battles, a leader in the national fight in the 1930s and 40s to integrate fire departments in L.A., Boston, Chicago, Baltimore and Philly, and now, in 2015, headed by Regina Wilson, one of the FDNY's few black female firefighters.

Publishing just in time for the FDNY's 150th anniversary this year, **FIREFIGHT** offers a fresh look at our city's Bravest, blending high-octane firefighting, powerful stories of heroism, and critical Civil Rights history.