

All Involved

Ryan Gattis

For six days during the spring of 1992, the city of Los Angeles erupted in a volcano of violence following the Rodney King verdicts. Officially, the riots killed 53 people and caused \$1 billion worth of property damage. Gattis's explosive work of "sourced fiction" identifies more casualties: the gang members who used the nonexistent police and media presence in parts of the city to engage in their own tempest of unchecked violence. Opening with the grisly murder of a civilian taco stand employee whose siblings have gang ties, the novel circles out to cover the motivations and paybacks of rival gangbangers, in their own voices and in real time, as well as the perspectives of those trying to help, including a nurse and firefighter eyeing each other from afar. The author's ear for dialog and the street vernacular of the time—the novel comes with a multipage glossary—is finely tuned and captures the anarchic nature of the civic catastrophe enveloping the City of Angels. **VERDICT** An overwhelming and fully immersive performance from Gattis (*Kung Fu High School*), who finds the humanity and poetry in the most inhumane of circumstances. A solid addition to all fiction collections, though not for the fainthearted.

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