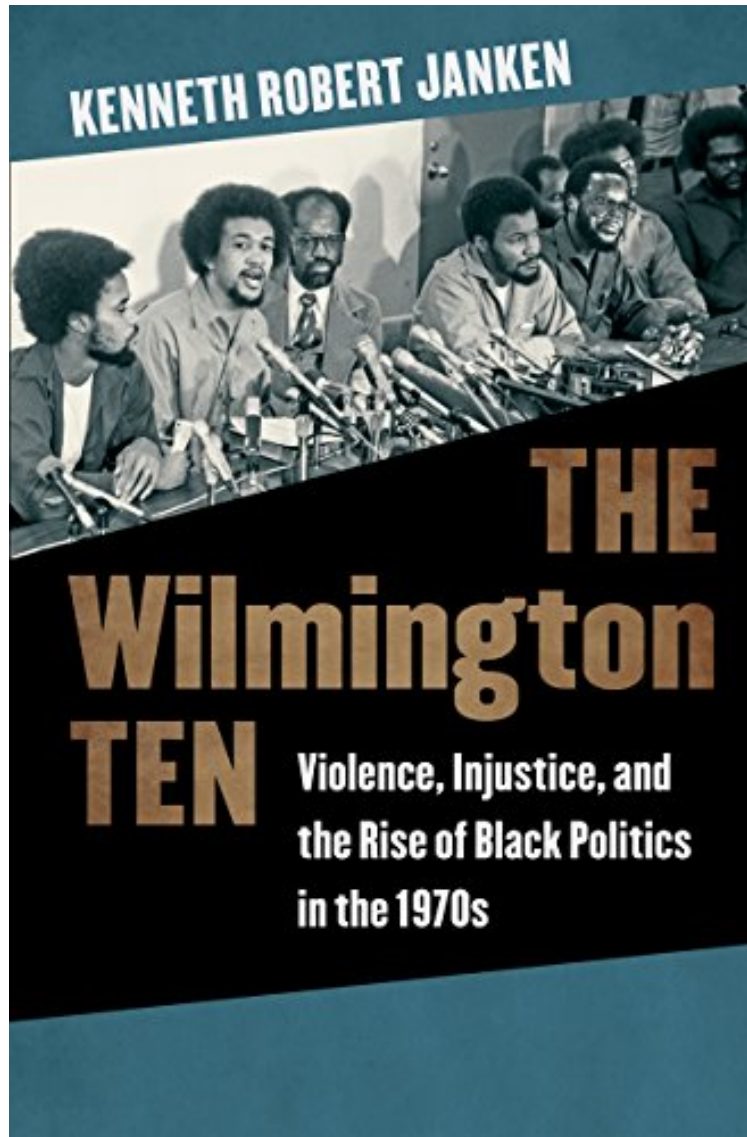


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The Wilmington Ten: Violence, Injustice, and the Rise of Black Politics in the 1970s

Kenneth Robert Janken

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In February 1971, racial tension surrounding school desegregation in Wilmington, North Carolina, culminated in four days of violence and skirmishes between white vigilantes and black residents. The turmoil resulted in two deaths, six injuries, more than \$500,000 in damage, and the firebombing of a white-owned store, before the National Guard restored uneasy peace. Despite glaring irregularities in the subsequent trial, ten young persons were convicted of arson and conspiracy and then sentenced to a total of 282 years in prison. They became known internationally as the Wilmington Ten. A powerful movement arose within North Carolina and beyond to demand their freedom, and after several witnesses admitted to perjury, a federal appeals court, also citing prosecutorial misconduct, overturned the convictions in 1980. Kenneth Janken narrates the dramatic story of the Ten, connecting their story to a larger arc of Black Power and the transformation of post-Civil Rights era political organizing. Grounded in extensive interviews, newly declassified government documents, and archival research, this book thoroughly examines the 1971 events and the subsequent movement for justice that strongly influenced the wider African American freedom struggle.

A passionate, intensely engaging portrait of the group's initial mission, as well as the terrible personal lifelong toll the struggle took.--Kirkus sThe subject matter is fascinating. . . [and] illustrative of how far Americans still have to go in bridging our society's divisions."Publishers WeeklySimultaneously thorough and concise, deeply researched, and insightful, *The Wilmington Ten* deserves a wide readership.--Journal of Southern HistoryProvides fresh insight into hard truths about procedures used by the state to suppress and repress black challenges to the racial status quo. . . . A sincere exploration of black politics in the 1970s, one that takes seriously black power activists and ideologies.--American Historical Explodes what little is left of [the] cut-and-paste version of the [civil rights] movement, reminding readers that many different movements were operating over a period of decades. . . . An important, approachable study.--North Carolina Historical Janken's highly recommended history of student racial protest provides a historical perspective on the current struggle for diversity within academia and the black lives matter movement.--Library JournalThis first book-length scholarly treatment of the event is meticulously researched and compelling in its analysis. . . . Highly recommended.--Choice Kenneth Janken provides us unique insights into one of the many violent battles in America's misrepresented racial war of the 1960s and 1970s--a war that has quieted but not ended.--John Sayles, director of *Matewan* and author of *A Moment in the Sun*The story of the Wilmington Ten, despite its tragic aspects, demonstrates the power of an inclusive, eclectic, and morally grounded movement to triumph over repression and wrong.Kenneth Janken has written an utterly fascinating account of a tumultuous and transformative episode in the struggle for democracy in America.--Timothy B. Tyson, Duke UniversityKenneth Janken's *Wilmington Ten* is a fast-paced, deeply researched investigation of an atrocity whose ordinary black and white victims might otherwise have remained all but forgotten and whose large civil rights significance holds lessons to be taught ever and again.--David Levering Lewis,Julius Silver University Professor, Emeritus, New York University, and author of books on Martin Luther King Jr., and W. E. B. Du BoisKenneth Janken provides the reader with a riveting, important account of a sorely understudied episode in the black freedom movement of the early-to-mid 1970s. *The Wilmington Ten* is likely to become a transformative work in the area of Black Freedom Studies.--Clarence Lang, author of *Black America in the Shadow of the Sixties*Kenneth Janken's unraveling of the tangled skein of one legal miscarriage of justice after another gives this work a cumulative and damning force. A riveting and important study of injustice in the modern South, Janken's work is especially important because he situates an engaging legal history against a fascinating backdrop of local, national, and even international politics. This is an unflinching work of history that makes a tremendously important contribution.--David Carter, Auburn UniversityAbout the AuthorKenneth Janken is professor of African American and Diaspora studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and director of the UNC Center for the Study of the American South.