

Book Review

One Ranger by H. Joaquin Jackson and David Marion Wilkinson, University of Texas Press, 2005.

BY CORINNE J. BROWN

For many, the Texas Ranger is part legend, part myth and part gritty reality.

Widely believed to be among the most fearless law enforcement groups in American history, these famed peace keepers, organized in 1823, were destined to encounter crimes consistent with the clash of cultures throughout Texas and its borderlands.

Even today, few citizens outside the Rangers could begin to estimate the courage and expertise required to maintain a career in this elite anti-crime force.

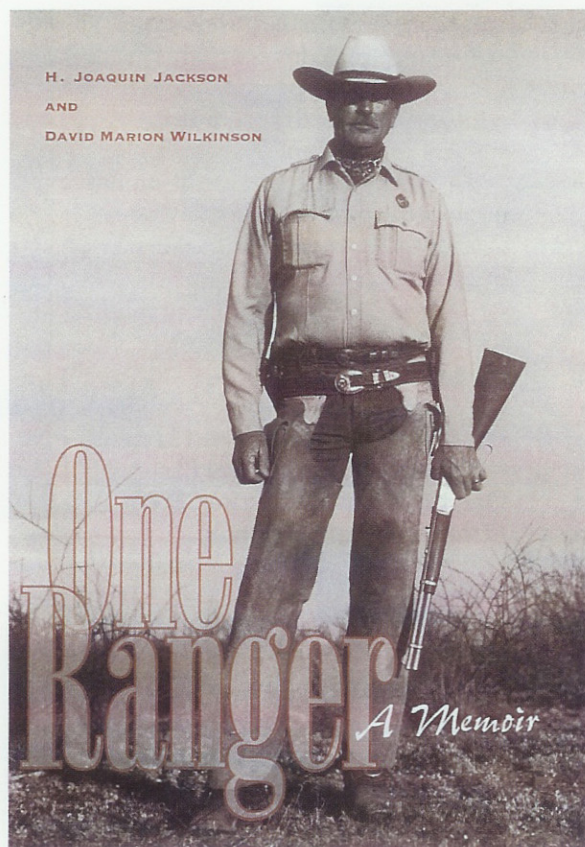
But *One Ranger*, a biography that reads like a novel, changes all that. H. Joaquin Jackson lived that life and writes eloquently about it.

With the help of award-winning novelist and biographer, David Marion Wilkinson, Jackson has created a walloping ride.

Jackson's career spans some 30 years in service to law and order in some of the toughest country in America, against some of the most heinous criminals on record.

His knowledge of the land, culture, language and customs, as well as his sharp-shooting skills, have made him an uncanny success in a field where only the strong survive.

A good example of what the Texas Rangers are, Jackson's adventures and exploits reveal a time and place in Texas history likely not to be seen again.



A man with a deep compassion for human beings, an intolerance for injustice, and a great respect for the law, Jackson appears in this book nearly larger than life.

Thanks to his assignment, originally part of a security staff on a film set, but also to his distinguished bearing, he enjoyed a brief career in films ~ *The Good Old Boys*, among others.

Add these accomplishments to his lifelong role as a husband and a father and Jackson emerges as one of those men some of us wish we had met early in life ~ a real American hero.

The art of biography has the stunning power to interpret a life as well as merely take note of it. Although the biography is written in the first person, a narrative by the subject himself, the expert guidance of novelist Wilkinson, currently a writer in residence at Sul Ross

University, is evident.

Through what must have been hours of interviews and pages of notes, Wilkinson instinctively sought out the real story behind each of the adventures told by Jackson and helped him clarify the essentials.

In compelling, and often lyrical prose, Jackson and Wilkinson spin a true tale that could make memorable fiction. A better collaboration would be hard to imagine.

Jackson says, "Every day I wore the star was a great day. I made mistakes. I had disappointments. I got my heart broken more than once. I got shot at and I shot back. I encountered ingratitude. I experienced betrayal. I saw a lot of tragedy. I endured a lot of personal pain. But I would go through all of it again if I could be that Texas Ranger

I was back in 1966, riding beside a living legend, Captain Alfred Y. Allee Sr., driving 110 miles an hour through country we both loved on our way to a riot."

He retired from the Rangers in 1993, and now lives in Alpine, Texas, where he is the owner and operator of Ranger Investigations, a private investigation company.

An irresistible book for lovers of Texas history, this is an even better read for anyone wondering how humans reach beyond boundaries, handle risks and give back to the world.

Thanks to this biography, H. Joaquin Jackson may become a legend in his own time, if he isn't one already. 🐾

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