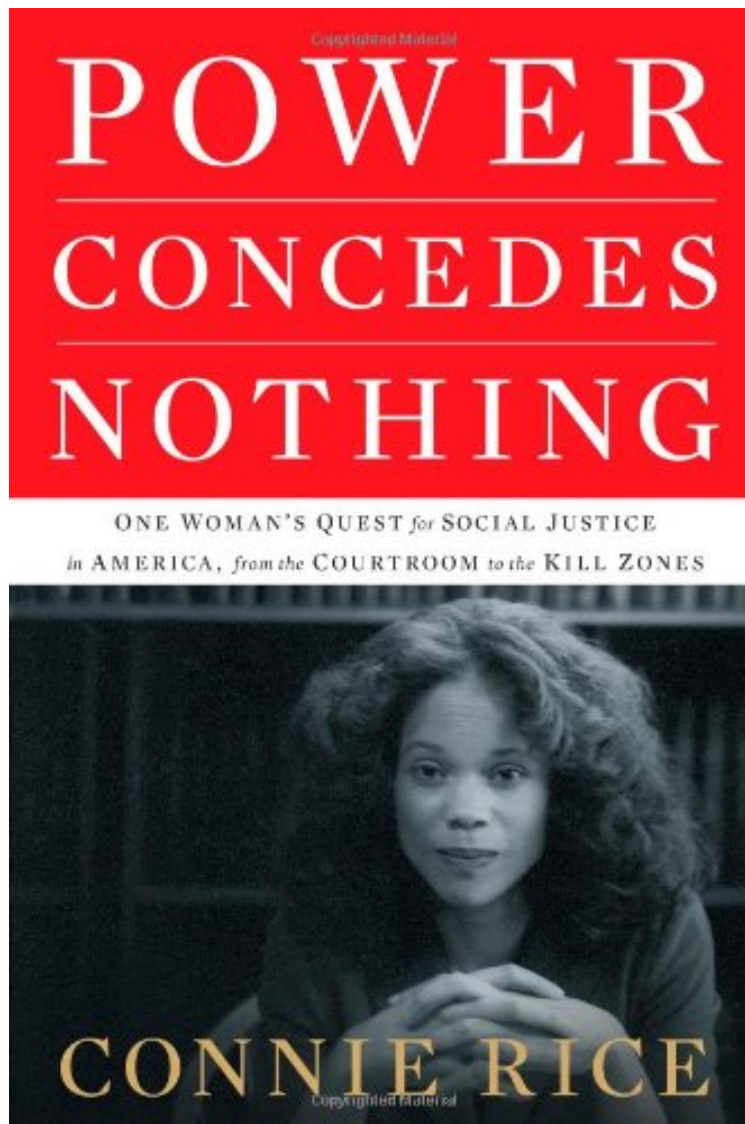


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## Power Concedes Nothing: One Woman's Quest for Social Justice in America, from the Courtroom to the Kill Zones

Connie Rice

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Connie Rice : **Power Concedes Nothing: One Woman's Quest for Social Justice in America, from the Courtroom to the Kill Zones** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Power Concedes Nothing: One Woman's Quest for Social Justice in America, from the Courtroom to the Kill Zones:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. another great book. By LA common good I actually have the 2014 version (I think it is just a different cover), but I see the reviews are all on this one. This is a fascinating and gripping read, very well written, and so important and helpful if you want to understand the history of civil rights and the legal system in Los Angeles over the last few decades! It is memoir style which makes it extra engaging to me. Reading this is a bit reminiscent of reading 'A Question of Intent' by David Kessler, about fighting big tobacco, another great book. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. PROFOUND BOOK!!!!!! A MUST READ By blonde bookboy I just finished Power Concedes Nothing and HAVE to say THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU to Ms Rice for writing this book of profound wisdom. I was literally blown away by her courageous continuing journey to empower the "invisible" members of society. Connie Rice writes in laser sharp prose that make this book a fast and compelling read. It is a book I could NOT put down due to the extremes Ms Rice has gone to in order to seek justice for her clients. I STRONGLY recommend this book to anyone that is moved by the quest for civil rights and the never-ending uphill climb to empower people who live on the fringe of our world. As a product of white privilege who was raised in rural West Texas, I have always been aware of the conscious and unconscious inequalities that saturate our country. I have been on a similar mission---like Ms Rice states, "to make good on the first duty we owe all children--the safety sufficient for them to learn and thrive" since leaving the farm lands of rural Texas. I now have ten years of NGO experience working hands-on with people of all ages, socio-economic levels, sexual orientations, and varying cultural backgrounds. Ms. Rice, I hold you up on a pedestal of Hope. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Power Concedes Nothing is a worthy read By Art Cribbs Ms. Rice, thank you for POWER CONCEDES NOTHING and your life long commitment to justice, equity and fairness. I am giving your book to my family and friends as gifts this year. Also, I have made it required reading for my teenage daughters. My wife and I worked in Watts and the Jordan Downs housing development in 1993-1994. Your experiences and insights are similar to what we knew to be true. You have written a powerful reflection of life under the gun in the community where I grew up and returned. Hope amid despair is realized among those who strive to give life a chance against the odds. Your book captures the essence of lingering neglect and self-induced commitments to make change possible in an environment that denied the value of human beings who reside there and a police force that failed "To Serve and Protect" them. Rev. Dr. Art Cribbs Executive Director Clergy and Laity United For Economic Justice, California

From one of the nations most influential civil rights attorneys second cousin of former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice a noble, hard-hitting memoir chronicling the life of a fiercely powerful woman dedicated to public service. Connie Rice has taken on the bus system, the school system, the death penalty, the LAPD and won. She has been at the forefront of dozens of major civil rights cases. In 1998, the Los Angeles Times designated Connie Rice one of the most experienced, civic-minded, and thoughtful people on the subject of Los Angeles. Rice literally wrote the report that has revolutionized the city's law enforcement and outreach to gangs. Now, one of America's most prominent and successful civil rights litigators, Rice illuminates the origins and inspiration for her life's work in this extraordinary memoir. In her electrifying voice, Rice writes of being descended from a proud and erudite clan of former slaves and slaveowners who prized the aggressive pursuit of knowledge and voracious accomplishment. The Rice family's quest for excellence was the defining feature of Connie's youth, a childhood that would see her family move seventeen times across three continents, at the behest of the U.S. Air Force, for which her father was a racial-barrier-breaking major. The eldest of three children, Connie was inspired by influential women like Queen Elizabeth I, Anne Frank, and Rep. Barbara Jordan the first black woman elected to U.S. Congress from a Southern State whose eloquence and composure during the televised Watergate hearings so mesmerized a teenage Rice that she burned a hole ironing her father's shirt. Provocative and passionate, studded with dramatic stories of a life in the trenches of civil rights law, Power Concedes Nothing reveals the inspiring life of an indomitable woman who knows that power concedes nothing without a demand.

"[A] remarkable journey.... Open and insightful.... Readers will be appalled by the evils Rice fights, but astounded by the energy and intelligence she brings to the battle."--Publishers Weekly (starred review) Connie Rice is one of the few great progressive figures and voices whose love of poor people is visceral and whose commitment to justice is unstoppable. Don't miss this powerful story of a grand prophetic witness!--Cornel West, Princeton University "A compelling story of a life dedicated to creating positive and lasting change in two of the most significant issues facing our society, civil rights and gang violence. There is nobody in America today who has brought so much positive change to these two issues than Connie.... Anyone who cares about democracy and its true potential needs to read this book."--William J. Bratton, Former Chief-LAPD, Former Commissioner-NYPD "Writing with conviction, Connie Rice vividly portrays her life's work and her unyielding commitment to our shared family values the power of education, a dedication to improving the lives of others and a belief that it does not matter where you came from; it matters where you are going."--Condoleezza Rice, Former U.S. Secretary of State "Essential reading for civic leaders, soldiers and statesmen alike. One of our most thoughtful and dynamic leaders lays out how a holistic approach is required to address some of our nation's most complex problems."--Gen. (Ret.) Stanley A. McChrystal Connie Rice is

the most brilliant legal mind Ive encountered in my twenty-year broadcast history. I hang on her every word. She concedes nothing without a demand--never has and never will.--Tavis Smiley"Genuinely compelling.... [An] inspiring, passionate story."--Kirkus"This powerful memoir offers vivid accounts of the fight for social justice from the streets to the courtroom. An excellent read."--Booklist"A big, important story ... of [Rice's] passion, her history, her legal record and her connection to both the powerful and the underprivileged in Los Angeles."--Carolyn Kellogg, Los Angeles Times

**About the Author** Connie Rice is renowned for her unconventional approaches to tackling problems of inequity and exclusion. Rice has received more than fifty major awards for her leadership of diverse coalitions, and her non-traditional approaches to litigating major cases involving police misconduct, employment discrimination and fair public resource allocation. She successfully co-litigated class-action, civil rights cases winning more than \$1.6 billion in policy changes and remedies during her nine year tenure in the Los Angeles office of the NAACP Legal Defense Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF). One of the founders of The Advancement Project, Rice is a graduate of Harvard College and the New York University School of Law. Visit her website: [PowerConcedesNothing.com](http://PowerConcedesNothing.com). Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

**Power Concedes Nothing Prologue**

**WAKE-UP CALL** The sound of a ringing telephone early in the morning never means good news. In twenty years as a civil rights attorney in Los Angeles, Ive had my share of shattering midnight calls from police and gang intervention workers, clients and social workers, all with urgent summons to crime scenes, confrontations, and emergency rooms. But few calls rattled my world like the one that came on a quiet Jacaranda June morning in 2008. The day had started peacefully enough. The neighborhood rooster had just begun his sun-raising reveille as my blue Prius rolled silently into the predawn darkness that hid the lilac splendor of the Jacaranda trees. Other than spending the night at work, this was my only way to avoid Los Angeles homicide-inducing rush hour, and to steal some time to think before the chaos of the day kicked in. With the red-light gods asleep, I blazed the nineteen-mile drive from my mountainside home to downtown L.A. in record time, arriving at work just as the sun sliced between the glass-and-chrome towers. With no other soul in sight, I sailed up the elevator to my office at the Advancement Project, the action tank that my law partners, Molly Munger, Steve English, Penda Hair, and I founded to finish what Martin Luther King Jr. started. Once upstairs, I scooped up the newspapers, cut through the kitchen, brewed some tea, and slipped across the hall into the cool darkness of my windowless den. Id tossed the papers onto the desk and picked up my steaming cup when the phone rang. Hello? I barked at the interruption. There was no good reason for anyone being on my office phone that early. Emergency calls would have rung on my cell or home phone. The jarred caller caught his breath. Hello, maam, Im looking for Miss Connie Rice. I frowned; part of me resisted being called maam, and all of me hated miss. But he meant no harm, just respect. This is she. Who is this? Yes, maam, he quavered, Im Captain Mendell calling from DODthe Defense Department in Washington Not again. Then you need my cousin, I interrupted. Shes around the corner from you, at the State Department I was about to add the obligatory Im ConNIE, shes ConDI, but it was his turn to cut me off. No, no, maam, Im looking for the Connie Rice in Los Angeles, he said. My C.O. just heard that you have a gang training academy, and we need to come out and see it. Who had told his commanding officer that our fledgling gang-intervention training courses were a full-blown academy? Barely eighteen months had passed since wed unleashed our blockbuster report, A Call to Action: A Case for a Comprehensive Solution to Los Angeles Gang Epidemic. In it wed rebuked L.A. Countys thirty-year war on gangs and demanded a bold switch from mindless war to holistic prevention and family/neighborhood building. Some politicians had cursed it, but the Los Angeles Daily News had hailed the report as a Marshall plan for L.A. gangs. Eighteen months had not been enough time to adjust to the strong support it had won from the police agencies we used to sue. Los Angeles Police Department Chief William Bratton and L.A. County Sheriff Lee Baca, L.A.s top cops, had even backed our call for an academy to professionalize gang intervention workers, former gang leaders who worked the streets to cut gang violence. Ending up allied with the police agencies I had repeatedly sued from 1990 to 2006 was a strange place for a civil rights lawyer to be. But it was the right place if the traumatized first-graders of the gang zones were ever to learn reading before they learned to duck bullets in a bathtub. In their neighborhoods, guns and gangs ruled, not civil rights. Before that June morning in 2008, my most alarming call had involved an ex-gangster and a good cop, both saying I had to foil a curbside execution of a fugitive homicide suspect by police. But after years of fighting for and winning police reform, we had closed ranks with the good cops and, with a battalion of gang interventionists, had turned to fight L.A.s widening epidemic of gang power and violence. This DOD call made me worry once again that we were doing way too little, far too late. But we had no choice. To win the civil rights battle of the twenty-first century for safety and viable education or ever get more than the delusion of homeland security the savage inequalities of L.A.s gang zones had to end. It was clear why our report had captured L.A.s attention. But DODs? Would you mind telling me why DOD is interested in our gang work? I asked, setting down my tea and trying to sound casual. Maam, your gangs are like the insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan, he replied with forthright military stoicism. And you are using strategies that win cooperation from some gangs to reduce violence. We need your help. My first thought was: If DOD thinks our work can help in Baghdad, things outside the Green Zone must be truly desperate. Then his words sank in: Our gangs were like insurgents? Under the whirlwind of thoughts beginning to spin in my head, my gut told me the man on the phone represented something important. But before going down any road with the military, Id have to think deeply about the likely blowback. The

last thing L.A.s gang epidemic needed was more militarization. After a thirty-year \$25 billion war on gangs, L.A. had racked up an impressive scorecard of a million arrests but also six times as many gangs and enough gang violence to alarm the World Health Organization. War had boosted the number of gangs and done nothing to stop the spread of gang ideology, influence, and power. The country had made a similar shock-and-awe mistake in the war on terrorism, and now this hapless captain had to seek help for Operation Iraqi Freedom from us. I was deeply disturbed by the war in Iraq, but I knew that as the secretary of state, Condoleezza had been pushing hard for diplomacy and community building. The captain's request signaled a similar change in at least a corner of the Pentagon. But what did it signal for L.A.? My mind ran through the parallels between L.A. and Baghdad that the captain must have seen. Both had hot zones engulfed by violence that too few had the political will to stop. In L.A., we had no will to end the conditions and culture that had spawned a thousand gangs. In Baghdad, there had been no will to halt vicious ethnic and religious clashes. A failed war on gangs finally had driven L.A. to go beyond search-and-destroy policing. And a faltering war of choice in Iraq had driven the military to go beyond search-and-destroy terrorist hunting. Both places had expended tons of blood and treasure on strategies that fueled the spread of violent ideology. Both were hobbled by rigid bureaucracies that were incapable of streamlined cooperation. Both had enforcers who finally understood they had to win the hearts and trust of the people by protecting them instead of hostilely occupying their neighborhoods. And both places had to make tactical alliances with selected insurgents. The good news was that in 2008 Americans were spending billions of dollars to remedy the conditions that fueled street violence. The bad news was that we were doing it in Baghdad and Khandahar, not in L.A. The gang violence epidemic in Los Angeles, however, was not a military or police failure. It was a socioeconomic, policy, and cultural failure. With eighty thousand gang members county-wide, we would never arrest or litigate our way out of the problem. L.A. needed to stabilize gang violence, invest in prevention, help neighborhoods and families counter the pull of gang ideology, and push alternatives to la vida loca with jobs, good schools, and a cultural movement that rejects violence. Clear. Hold. Build. Educate. Employ. Maybe Captain Mendel had called the right place after all. I reassured him that we'd find a way to help, signed off, and then sat in wondrous consternation over his request to observe our work. At the time, I had no idea that this unsettling call would lead to far more alarming military assessments that would catapult all of our gang and police reform work to the transnational level and send me down an even more dangerous road. Yet in many ways, this road resembled others I'd been forced to take. It was the road of risk, counterintuitive tactics, unlikely alliances, and unorthodox actions that anyone on a mission to win basic civil rights in America's kill zones had to take. It was the mission to make sure our poorest kids also reached the mountaintop that Martin Luther King Jr. glimpsed right before he died and to sound the alarm that the final cost of their chronic destitution would be our own destruction. It was a mission for which I had trained my entire life, one that would take everything I'd ever accomplished in order to fulfill the dreams of my ancestors.