



2019

How It Went Down

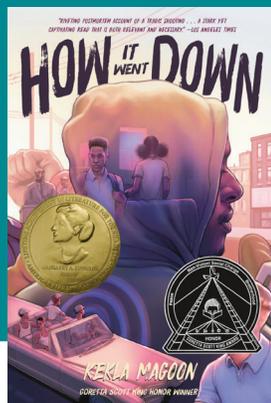
Emma Patton

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr>

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Patton, Emma (2019) "How It Went Down," *Children's Book and Media Review*. Vol. 40: Iss. 10, Article 6.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol40/iss10/6>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Children's Book and Media Review by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.



Book Review

How It Went Down

Author

Kekla Magoon

Reviewer

Emma Patton

Rating

Outstanding

Level

Young Adult

Pages

336

Year

2014

ISBN

9780805098693

Publisher

Henry Holt and Co.

Tariq Johnson is shot down in his own neighborhood after picking up groceries. But even though his death had multiple witnesses, they each seem to have interpreted the situation differently. While some see it as a senseless killing, others think Tariq had it coming to him. While some saw a gun in his hand, other just saw a Snickers bar. As news of the incident spreads through the neighborhood and then through the country, it seems that nobody is left untouched by the newest story of white-on-black violence. In the weeks after his death, it doesn't seem to matter who knew him well and who didn't. Everyone is wondering whether Tariq was at fault. Everyone is wondering how much of this killing has to do with race. But, most of all, everyone is wondering how something like this could happen again and what they can do to change it.

During this time where gun violence is commonplace and interracial violence is rampant, this is an especially important story to tell. It would have been easy for the author to simplify Tariq's death, but she emphasizes the complexity of the situation by discussing his relationships with local gang members and his confrontational attitude. This raises important questions, like whether a victim's gang involvement or antagonistic demeanor exonerates the shooter. This story is told from many different perspectives, including members of Tariq's family, witnesses to the shooting, and even a politician using the story to further his campaign. Even with the rotation of many narrators, author Kekla Magoon creates clear distinctions between the characters so that it is easy for a reader to follow their stories without much background. Ultimately, this is the story of a community. It seems that the only person who doesn't share in the storytelling is Tariq himself, so while the book is focused around him, he also is somewhat of a secondary character. This book is original and thought-provoking.

*Contains severe language, moderate violence, mild drug abuse, and mild sexual content.