



# Show Me A Hero

By Lisa Belkin

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-- Public housing projects are being torn down throughout the United States.

What will take their place? Show Me a Hero explores the answer.

-- An important and compelling work of narrative nonfiction in the tradition of J. Anthony Lukas's Common Ground.

-- A sweeping yet intimate group portrait that assesses the effects of public policy on individual human lives.

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## Show Me A Hero By Lisa Belkin Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

### Amazon.com Review

*"The pipe bomb was small as pipe bombs go, but the explosion could be heard from several blocks away--a sharp bang as rows of factory-fresh ceramic tiles shattered into a pile of razor-edged rubble. Neighbors who were drifting off to sleep sat upright, awake. Family members who were preparing for bed looked at each other first with questions, then with certainty they had the answer. 'I guess somebody is trying to blow up the new housing,' one man joked to his wife. But it wasn't a joke. That's exactly what someone was trying to do."*

In 1988, when a federal judge ordered the city of Yonkers, New York, to integrate more thoroughly its low-income housing throughout the city, it set off a bitter dispute that would consume the town for the next five years. Among those caught in the controversy was the city's 28-year-old mayor, Nicholas Wasiczko, who had used the issue to his advantage during his campaign and found that he would never be able to escape it, either during or after his administration. Veteran *New York Times* journalist Lisa Belkin focuses not on the abstract "sides" of the integration debate, but on the people who take those sides. It's that personal perspective that makes her account most worth reading.

### From Publishers Weekly

In the late 1980s, the city of Yonkers, N.Y., made national headlines because of a bitter battle waged by many of its residents and political leaders against a federal court-ordered public housing plan. The plan compelled Yonkers to build public housing in the predominantly white east-side districts of the city. The heated opposition to the plan convulsed the city, which complied with the court order only when court-imposed fines threatened to consume the entire city budget. Belkin, who covered the story for the *New York Times*, follows the housing battle through the eyes of its participants: fearful white residents of the east side; black public housing tenants anxious to escape the misery of the west-side projects; Oscar Newman, the housing consultant and architect who designed the new town houses; and Nick Wasiczko, the young mayor of Yonkers who courageously confronted his own core constituency and tried to get the city to accept the plan (and who, five years later, out of office and out of prospects, shot himself). In her effort to interweave so many personal perspectives, Belkin sometimes loses her focus on the key public policies at stake. She does, however, enable readers to feel the hopes and fears of both the homeowners, who felt that their neighborhoods and property values were threatened by the housing plan, and the disadvantaged public housing tenants, who were seeking redress for years of discrimination and simply wanted a safe place to call home. Belkin's gritty book is a vivid slice of urban politics, racial tension and the difficulties inherent in realizing the American dream.

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### From Library Journal

In the 1980 case *U.S. v. Yonkers*, the Justice Department charged that race determined the location and quality of education in Yonkers, a situation created by the segregation of housing. In 1985 the court ruled that new public housing must be built on the white middle-class east side of the city. By 1988, when *New York Times* writer Belkin's narrative begins, the stand-off between the federal judge and the city has escalated into war; the judge's orders were not obeyed until his fines brought the city to the brink of bankruptcy. Belkin (*First Do No Harm*, LJ 1/93) lets a diverse group of individuals tell the story of the battles and then the building, including the mayor, a citizen who protested the decision, and several residents of public housing. This is an interesting look at how a court decision and politics can affect people on an individual level. Although there are no footnotes, it's apparent that Belkin has done a thorough job. Highly recommended for all libraries.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Carlos Reese:**

Why don't make it to become your habit? Right now, try to prepare your time to do the important behave, like looking for your favorite book and reading a e-book. Beside you can solve your trouble; you can add your knowledge by the guide entitled Show Me A Hero. Try to make book Show Me A Hero as your good friend. It means that it can to be your friend when you really feel alone and beside that of course make you smarter than ever. Yeah, it is very fortunated for yourself. The book makes you a lot more confidence because you can know every thing by the book. So , we should make new experience in addition to knowledge with this book.

#### **Dennis Mock:**

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#### **Jennifer Powell:**

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