

IN THE SHADOWS OF THE FLAMES

BALTIMORE'S 1968 APRIL RIOTS



At quarter past 6 o'clock on a cool Saturday evening on April 6, 1968, Baltimore's Oldtown Gay Street was in turmoil. As a fire engine tried to maneuver through the excited and unruly crowds to fight a blazing furniture store fire, firefighters were astonished as mobs of people heckled and shouted profanity at them. The streets were packed with people throwing objects through large glass store windows to shatter them into a million shards. Men, women and children ran from stores with armfuls of cigarette cartons, lamps, small televisions and radios. Cars were backed up to stores loading up looted goods. The police officers were overwhelmed and powerless. And, this was just the beginning of the rampage and devastation that lasted for the next four nights and days.

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Author Joseph B. Ross Jr., CFPS, retired in 2000 as a division chief after 33 years with the Anne Arundel County, Maryland, fire department. He has served on the faculty of the University of Maryland, Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute, is currently a Fire Program Specialist with the federal government, written extensively for fire service journals. He also authored *Arundel Burning*, *The Maryland Oyster Roast Fire of 1956*.

For more information visit www.arundelburning.com

