



The Eighth Day

Harold Coyle

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In the tradition of Seven Days in May, written by Fletcher Knebel and Charles W. Bailey at the height of the Cold War, The Eight Day is a fictional account of a Constitutional crisis that pits the President of the United States and key members of his administration against members of the Armed Forces and the American electorate. Timothy Rowland, the White House chief of staff and a man who believes a crisis is a terrible thing to waste, seizes upon a bloody confrontation between a Mexican drug cartel in Arizona and members of a militia group led by Allen Devin, a charismatic retired Marine colonel, to suppress what he views as lawless vigilantism along the border with Mexico. A raid on Devin's militia, comprised entirely of veterans hand picked by Devin, miscarries due to advanced warning by members of the armed forces and local authorizes who are sympathetic to Devin's stance. The FBI raid, conducted without prior notice to the Governor of Arizona and broadcast live by a reporter sent to interview Devin for a television news network, leads to the governor shutting down all Federal buildings and agencies in the state as well as the mobilization of the State's National Guard. To meet this challenge, the President enacts the Insurrection Act, which authorizes him to use the U.S. Military to restore Federal authority in Arizona. This action results in a crisis of conscience among members of the uniformed services, leading the Joint Chiefs of Staff and several senior commanders throughout the military to decline to use American troops to resolve what they view as a political crisis best resolved between the Federal government and the governor of Arizona. Determined to meet this challenge to the President's authority, Rowland contrives a show of force designed to crush Devin's rebellious militia and cower the state's governor using a direct assault by a Ranger battalion commanded by an officer willing to carry out the president's orders. Devin and the state governor, aware of this move, counter it by calling for all concerned and patriotic Americans to converge on Washington, D.C. and shut down the Federal government, followed by the convening of a constitutional convention for the purpose of rewriting the Constitution of the United States. As tension between the Federal government, a growing number of governors agree to the governor of Arizona's call for a constitutional convention while public outrage over the President's actions sets into motion a mass march on Washington that aims to shut down the Federal government. The Ranger battalion, which defers launching a full blooded assault on the militia compound, finds itself involved in a siege within a siege, as it surrounds the militia compound but finds itself surrounded by elements of the Arizona National Guard.

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