



# **Patriotic Treason: John Brown and the Soul of America**

*Evan Carton*

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John Brown is a lightning rod of history. Yet he is poorly understood and most commonly described in stereotypes -- as a madman, martyr, or enigma. Not until *Patriotic Treason* has a biography or history brought him so fully to life, in scintillating prose and moving detail, making his life and legacy -- and the staggering sacrifices he made for his ideals--fascinatingly relevant to today's issues of social justice and to defining the line between activism and terrorism.

Vividly re-creating the world in which Brown and his compatriots lived with a combination of scrupulous original research, new perspectives, and a sensitive historical imagination, *Patriotic Treason* narrates the dramatic life of the first U.S. citizen committed to absolute racial equality. Here are his friendships (Brown lived, worked, ate, and fought alongside African Americans, in defiance of the culture around him), his family (he turned his twenty children by two wives into a dedicated militia), and his ideals (inspired by the Declaration of Independence and the Golden Rule, he collaborated with black leaders such as Frederick Douglass, Martin Delany, and Harriet Tubman to overthrow slavery).

Evan Carton captures the complex, tragic, and provocative story of Brown the committed abolitionist, Brown the tender yet demanding and often absent father and husband, and Brown the radical American patriot who attacked the American state in the name of American principles. Through new research into archives, attention to overlooked family letters, and reinterpretation of documents and events, Carton essentially reveals a missing link in American history.

A wrenching family saga, *Patriotic Treason* positions John Brown at the heart of our most profound and enduring national debates. As definitions of patriotism and treason are fiercely contested, as some criticize religious extremism while others mourn religion's decline, and as race relations in America remain unresolved, John Brown's story speaks to us as never before, reminding us that one courageous individual can change the course of history.

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