"The New Censorship": Inside the Global Battle for Media Freedom

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Career with the National Park Service as a seasonal ranger at Crater Lake in 1957. Before retiring, in 1989, she served in numerous positions of increasing responsibility at parks across the country and at NPS headquarters in Washington, D.C. In each position, she kept journals, from which she has now written a detailed memoir. Although her main duties were conducting wildlife studies, presenting ranger talks, and occasionally taking tickets or directing traffic, she served as a catalyst to the awakening of the NPS to its role in wilderness preservation and the conservation of endangered species. Throughout his account, Wauer keeps the tone light, letting readers know the birds he saw at each park and the names of the naturalists and park officials with whom he worked, noting but not dwelling on the fights with political appointees in the Interior Department. With a bit of envy, readers may wish they had led such a life as Wauer's. —Rick Roche

**The New Censorship: Inside the Global Battle for Media Freedom.**


Simon, a freelance correspondent in Mexico during the 1990s and currently the executive director of the Committee to Protect Journalists, brings a wealth of on-the-ground reporting expertise and experience with defending journalists to this wide-ranging and shattering assessment of threats to contemporary journalism. Simon takes the position that journalists (including citizen journalists) have been a huge part of setting the humanitarian agenda of shining the light on atrocities and abuses that would remain unseen if the photo weren’t taken or the report not filed. This uncovering has always been a dangerous business. However, a perfect storm of economic strain on newspapers, resulting in hurried, big-story-only visits by foreign correspondents; the widespread killings and kidnappings of journalists who do venture abroad or within their own country; and governmental manipulation and control of the media, especially through technology, has made current foreign reporting an increasingly lethal profession.

The result is that the public is kept ignorant of the depths of human-rights abuses and conflicts. This book is far more wide ranging than its title indicates. Simon writes about the effects of social media on the production and consumption of news, the ways that corporate and partisan control of the media impoverishes us all, and how governments prevent their own people and a worldwide audience from knowing what’s really going on. Most moving are Simon’s wrenching stories of the ordeal journalists have suffered, from kidnappings through imprisonment through death. Simon’s assessment of what it means to be a journalist and his call to action at book’s end are moving and practical. A must-read.

—Connie Fletcher

**Silent Witnesses: The Often Gruesome but Always Fascinating History of Forensic Science.**


A former British police officer who now produces crime entertainment in the form of novels and TV series, McCrery surveys cases that were signal advances in the history of criminal detection techniques. Prefacing his subject by noting the difficulty, prior to the late 1800s, of correctly identifying murder suspects, McCrery launches into the first systematic devised to apprehend malefactors, that of French detective Alphonse Bertillon. While effective, Bertillon’s method was superseded by fingerprinting. Its superiority evidenced in cases from a century ago, fingerprinting’s quality of identifying unique individuals, like that of DNA today, guides McCrery’s narratives of murder investigations. Ballistic evidence offers comparable probative power for discovering murder weapons, as McCrery shows in his technical explanation and his account of a 1928 conviction of a British cop-killer. Covering additional objects of forensic analysis, such as blood, hair and fiber, and poisons, McCrery completes his presentation of the major tools used in modern criminal forensics. While true criminal forensics accounts are legion, a knowledgeable book like McCrery’s will spark interest and circulation.

—Gilbert Taylor

**Thunder in the Mountains: A Portrait of American Gun Culture.**


Last year’s Gun Guys, by Dan Baum, explored America’s gun culture: its enthusiasts, its debates, its personalities. Collins’ new memoir inevitably covers some of the same ground, but it’s a more personal story, focusing (mostly) on the author’s own family and friends, exploring how their lives have been affected in various ways by America’s attitude toward firearms. The story, which recounts the author’s childhood in a family in which guns were a part of everyday life, is punctuated by tragedy: a friend is seriously injured by a gunshot to the head in a hunting accident; another friend’s father commits suicide by shooting himself; the author shoots himself in the foot in another hunting accident; and so on. It’s not really a book about the broader side of America’s gun culture; it’s a book about the way a man’s life was shaped by that culture and how gun violence touched his life. Collins views a subject that elicits seemingly endless topics for debate and gives it a single, highly personal point of view: this is how all