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

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SILENT WITNESSES: THE OFTEN GROUSE BUT ALWAYS FASCINATING HISTORY OF FORENSIC SCIENCE

By Connie Fletcher
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 system 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 While effective, Bertillon's method was superseded by fingerprinting.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

BY Dan Baum
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 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