

reburied in the monument's crypts in 1901 by members of the Lincoln Guard of Honor. The author uses a vast array of primary and secondary sources to trace the history of the Secret Service, embalming, counterfeiting, and grave-robbing statutes. Academic libraries will welcome this addition into their collections as a good companion to Merrill Peterson's *Lincoln in American Memory* and William C. Harris's *Lincoln's Last Months*.—Gayla Koerting, Univ. of South Dakota Lib., Vermillion

Dash, Mike. *Satan's Circus: Murder, Vice, Police Corruption, and New York's Trial of the Century*. Crown. Jun. 2007. c.448p. bibliog. index. ISBN 1-4000-5471-0 [ISBN 978-1-4000-5471-8]. \$24.95. HIST

Journalist and historian Dash (*Batavia's Graveyard*) proves that truth is often stranger than fiction with this monograph on Charles Becker (1870–1915), the only New York City police officer to be executed for murder. A Republican of German descent who stood out in a predominantly Irish and Democratic police force, Becker presided over Satan's Circus (a.k.a. the Tenderloin), midtown Manhattan's entertainment, gambling, and prostitution zone. His indictment and conviction for conspiracy to murder

gambler Herman Rosenthal resulted in what the contemporary press called the "trial of the century" in 1912, followed by a retrial in 1914 and Becker's subsequent electrocution. Drawing from legal documents, newspapers, magazines, detective reports found in the Municipal Archives, the private Becker family collections, and Sullivan County (NY) repositories, Dash crisply traces the descent of a "crooked cop" in the context of a corrupt and crime-ridden metropolis. He augments his tale with appearances by characters like Tammany politico "Big Tim" Sullivan, writer Stephen Crane, and Police Commissioner Theodore Roosevelt. Using colloquialisms he freely explains—e.g., "sporting men" frequenting "blind tigers" (unlicensed drinking dens)—Dash serves up an intriguing story that will interest social historians and general readers alike. Highly recommended. [See Prepub Alert, *LJ* 2/15/07].—Frederick J. Augustyn Jr., Library of Congress

Davis, Mike. *Buda's Wagon: A Brief History of the Car Bomb*. Verso, dist. by Norton. Mar. 2007. c.228p. photogs. index. ISBN 978-1-84467-132-8. \$19.95. HIST

On September 16, 1920, an Italian anarchist named Mario Buda parked a horse-drawn wagon across the street from the J.P. Morgan & Co. building in New York. At noon, the explosives in the wagon ignited, killing 40 people and injuring more than 200. This event marked the first modern use of an inconspicuous vehicle to transport explosives to a target anonymously; as Davis (*The Monster at Our Door: The Global Threat of Avian Flu*) puts it, this was the prototype of the car bomb. Davis traces the use of the car bomb from the 1920s to the late 1940s, when Zionist guerrillas used the device against both the British and the Palestinians during the fighting leading up to the founding of Israel, and then continues through various international conflicts from Vietnam to Ireland to Iraq. He also presents the evolution of the explosives used in these bombs, from TNT to the ammonium nitrate and fuel oil mixtures used by the Irish Republican Army and convicted Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh. Davis's well-written and well-documented account joins a list of recent books on modern weapon systems, e.g., Larry Kahaner's *AK-47: The Weapon That Changed the Face of War*. Recommended for all libraries.—Stephen L. Hupp, West Virginia Univ. Lib., Parkersburg

Engerman, Stanley L. *Slavery, Emancipation, and Freedom: Comparative Perspectives*. Louisiana State Univ. Apr. 2007. c.128p. bibliog. ISBN 0-8071-3236-5 [ISBN 978-0-8071-3236-4]. \$25. HIST

Engerman (economics & history, Univ. of Rochester; coauthor, *Time on the Cross*), who has coauthored and coedited several books about slavery and American and British history, claims that slavery in the southern United States was neither as bad as it seems nor as bad as it was in other parts of the world. To support this argument, he includes extensive notes, a 22-page bibliography, and numerous quotes from Frederick Douglass (whom he often contradicts). Slave fertility rates and the "greater heights" of slaves in the United States as compared with those of slaves in the West Indies and Africa are two examples he gives to convince readers that southern U.S. slaves were treated better than slaves living elsewhere. Engerman's book was initially part of a series of lectures that focused on pro-Southern scholarship and does not succeed in demonstrating its usefulness in any other context. For an overview of world slavery, try Milton Meltzer's *Slavery: A World History* or Junius P. Rodriguez's *Chronology of World Slavery*. Those interested in the perspectives of slaves in the South would do well with *Remembering Slavery*, edited by Ira Berlin and others, or *Voices from Slavery: 100 Authentic Slave Narratives*. Not recommended.—Tonya Briggs, Oberlin Coll. Lib., OH

Halm, Heinz. *The Arabs: A Short History*. Markus Wiener. Apr. 2007. c.190p. tr. from German by Allison Brown & Thomas Lampert. photogs. maps. bibliog. index. ISBN 1-55876-416-X [ISBN 978-1-55876-416-3]. \$89.95. HIST

While short in length, this book is wide in scope and range, both historically and geographically, covering the Arab peoples (that is, the more than 280 million people in North Africa and the Middle East who speak Arabic) from their pre-Islamic origins and the first recorded use of the term *Arab* to today's troubles in Iraq. In fewer than 200 pages, Halm (Islamic studies, Univ. of Tübingen, Germany; *Shi'a Islam: From Religion to Revolution*) does a marvelous job of condensing over 1000 years of history into seven chapters arranged chronologically, with subchapters arranged geographically, which makes the material easy to follow. Halm includes information on the many different cultures and governments, the Prophet Muhammad and his successors, Islamic dynasties, countries and rulers, interaction with the West and colonialism, literature and languages, modern nationalism and various wars, Israel, and the Sunni and Shi'ah. Written for a general audience, it is recommended for all public and undergraduate libraries as budgets allow.—Melissa Aho, Metropolitan State Univ., St. Paul, MN

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