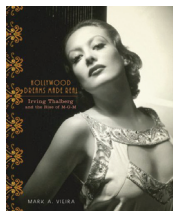


ing a lot of time explaining motivation. Ryan dispatches this baddie with a particularly gruesome goodbye. Call it a good example of ending a story with a bang. (February) *Dick Cady*

Adult Nonfiction

BIOGRAPHY & AUTOBIOGRAPHY



Hollywood Dreams Made Real: Irving Thalberg and the Rise of M-G-M

Mark A. Vieira

Harry N. Abrams

Hardcover \$50.00 (240pp)

978-0-8109-7234-6

There are certainly reasons to approach this book cautiously. Despite producer Irving Thalberg's celebrated influence on American film, the trite phrase "Hollywood Dreams" gives one pause. In fact, it wouldn't be unreasonable to expect this account of "the rise of M-G-M" to be a collection of vacuous glamour portraits loosely united by the Thalberg association.

As it turns out, though, author Mark Vieira has told a true pictorial history, skipping neither on the pictures nor the history—and doing so with nary a cliché in sight. Beginning before the creation of M-G-M—the original "media merger" to have lasting impact—and moving through Thalberg's success grooming such stars as Joan Crawford and Clark Gable, *Hollywood Dreams Made Real* is remarkably evocative considering its light touch. Particularly fascinating is its inside look at filmmaking during the transition to talkies, a period many know from its comedic treatment in *Singin' in the Rain*.

Although later reversing himself dramatically, Thalberg was initially dismissive of sound pictures (and color, too). Yet while Vieira is upfront in revealing such short-sightedness, he can act as apologist, too. After discussing legal suits brought against M-G-M for libel and plagiarism in 1932, both of which apparently had merit, he comments, "Such missteps were inevitable in a year when Thalberg was defying the Depression." This sentence may represent a leap in logic many readers won't be willing to take.

Still, these are minor gripes about a book that's never less than stunning in scope, detail, and design. Vieira's grasp of history in its broader context is impressive, and his prose style is clear and restrained, highlighted by his knack for selecting the perfect quote. Similarly, his year-by-year organization is quite straightforward—don't look for grand, thematic approaches to movie history à la David Thomson. Vieira introduces each year with about five (illustrated) pages of text, then uses what might be called a "gallery" presentation, with photos covering major productions accompanied by clean, concise captions.

In an interesting epilogue, Vieira speculates about what Thalberg's career might have been had he not died so young. It's probably safe to say that he would have been increasingly out of place in an industry so rife with self-promotion: incredibly, Thalberg never put his own name on these classic films, which explains why today's audiences may not be aware of his vital contributions to them...a situation that *Hollywood Dreams Made Real* corrects in breathtaking fashion. (October) *Peter Gutiérrez*



Madame Prosecutor: Confrontations with Humanity's Worst Criminals and the Culture of Impunity

Carla Del Ponte and Chuck Sudetic

Other Press

Hardcover \$25.95 (448pp)

978-1-59051-302-6

Every law student learns quickly that neither the United States nor any other country has legal authority over foreign powers or their citizens. The United Nations is an institution deprived of the two standard tools of behavior motivation: rewards and punishments. International relations are a complex dance in which one party attempts to persuade the other of the rightness of their cause. Diplomacy is nothing more than persuasion without enforcement, while justice requires the ability to exercise at least the threatened power of coercion.

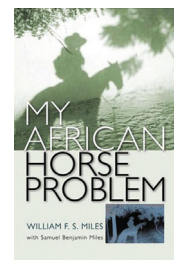
The International Criminal Court (ICC) was established in 2002 as a permanent tribunal with limited jurisdiction lacking total international support. The United States, China, Russia, and India, for example, are not signatories to the treaty that created the Court and are not bound to participate. Further, the Court itself is granted jurisdiction only where the nation involved is unable or unwilling to prosecute crimes committed within that nation's borders. Since its inception in 2002, the court has not conducted a trial of a single person.

Why, then, would a sophisticated lawyer like Switzerland's celebrated attorney general Carla Del Ponte and her well-informed co-author, Chuck Sudetic, assume that "Humanity's Worst Criminals" could or would be brought to any kind of justice in the ICC? Why do they describe the world criminal court's failure to succeed in prosecuting those criminals as the "Culture of Impunity," when impunity is precisely what all criminals have a right to expect from the international community? After all, it is the province of sovereign nations to bring their own criminals to justice, even though many nations are ill equipped to do so. This, Del Ponte and Sudetic argue, should be changed.

Madame Prosecutor is a lengthy discussion of the heinousness of crimes against humanity and a poignant plea for a better international criminal justice system. Using the imperfect system now in place, Del Ponte's efforts to bring

war criminals to trial are nothing short of fascinating and heroic. Her work contributed to the indictment, arrest, or prosecution of Slobodan Milosevic and dozens more. Sudetic's experience as a *New York Times* reporter and author as well as his work as an analyst for the Yugoslavia tribunal and his current position as senior writer for the Open Society Institute, also inform the politics and scope of *Madame Prosecutor*.

This memoir is densely packed with information that will be of most use to researchers, scholars, or readers interested in international judicial systems and liberal political philosophy. (January) *M. Diane Vogt*



My African Horse Problem

William F. S. Miles

University of

Massachusetts Press

Hardcover \$80.00 (208pp)

978-1-55849-681-1;

Softcover \$22.95 (208pp)

978-1-55849-682-8

"From afar, from America, most people dismiss my legal problem in Hausaland as quaint or comical merely because it's over a horse," Miles writes. "But what if the illicitly transferred item were not a horse but a stock certificate?"

William Miles first came to the region of Hausaland in western Africa as a young Peace Corps volunteer. He returned several times in the '80s as a Fulbright scholar to conduct research in the villages of Yekuwa and Yardaje. Fluent in the language of Hausa from his time in the Peace Corps, the author fit in well and was recognized and respected in both villages. Miles owned several horses during the years he spent on his research in Hausaland. It was the easiest means of transport between the two villages. Because of the difficulties of dealing with horse traders, when Miles left Africa in 1986, he entrusted his horse, Sa'a, to the chief of Yekuwa until his next return.

In 2000, Miles received a letter informing him that the chief had passed away and there was an inheritance dispute involving the horse. Soon he found himself back in Hausaland with his son Sam, who was eager to ride the African horse. But a number of factors promised to complicate the already complicated mission: Miles and Sam will first have to spend several days in neighboring Yardaje so as not to offend his old friends there; Miles' skills with the Hausa language have grown rusty; after fourteen years it is difficult to recognize his old friends; the formalities and superstition of Hausa culture will make it difficult to begin the transaction and resolve it in only four days; and he must bring home his ten-year-old son from a region where tropical diseases and "gastric threats" run rampant.

Miles tells his story with humor, offering detailed descriptions of life and customs in these African villages. He includes frequent interjections drawn from Sam's journal, in which Sam complains often about the village children who