

Books

We'll Always Have the Movies: American Cinema During World War II by **Robert L. McLaughlin, Ph.D. (FCRH '79, GSAS '87), and Sally E. Parry, Ph.D. (FCRH '75, GSAS '82), 368 pages. Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 2006. \$40.**



People today may have an abundance of entertainment options, but in the early 1940s, film was the dominant medium, with 90 million American viewers attending the movies every week. It should come as little surprise, then, that

Hollywood played a key role in educating the U.S. public about the principal political event of the time: World War II.

Robert L. McLaughlin and Sally E. Parry's *We'll Always Have the Movies* tells the story of how Hollywood, with some occasional cajoling from the American government, sought to persuade the American public to go to war, and how to act once they got there. Consider *Casablanca* (1941), which subtly argued that Americans like Rick—the café owner played by Humphrey Bogart—could not stand on the sidelines while war was under way.

McLaughlin and Parry, husband and wife and professors at Illinois State University, screened scores of movies about the war made between 1937 and 1946. Their socio-political analysis of these films is fascinating. *Mrs. Miniver* (1942) cultivated American solidarity with the British. *Manila Calling* (1942) explained why the Philippines—a country far from the coast of the United States—was worth fighting for. Other films, like *Tender Comrade* (1943), explored the changing social landscape on the American home front, where women were taking on new responsibilities outside the home.

Government agencies played a key role in shaping the content of World War II films. The military allowed Hollywood to make films about the armed services as long as

they stayed on message. The Office of War Information (OWI) compiled a manual for film studios regarding war movies. Typical question: "Will this picture help win the war?" Ultimately, however, Hollywood determined the film's final content, which explains why the political message was often leavened with romance and derring-do.

In the early years of the war, McLaughlin and Parry note, information about major battles was often scarce. Although newsreels played at many movie houses, they offered an incomplete picture of the conflict. So movies helped fill in the gaps: "Hollywood films, because they weren't obliged to stick to facts and because of the conventions of their narrative-based genre, were able to offer complete narratives and thus fulfill a need for viewers that the news could not."

More than anything else, however, the movies provided guidance for Americans unsure how to act in a time of political and social upheaval. "We went to the movies for entertainment, of course, but almost as much for instruction in techniques of self-presentation," noted historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr. "The movies supplied our models and shaped our dreams."

—Maurice Timothy Reidy

The 100-Mile Walk: A Father and Son on a Quest to Find the Essence of Leadership by **Sander A. Flaum, adjunct professor of management at Fordham's Graduate School of Business Administration and chair of the Fordham Leadership Forum, and Jonathon A. Flaum with Mechele Flaum, 272 pages. New York: Amacom, 2006. \$24.95.**

The 100-Mile Walk is not just a book about leadership, a topic covered exhaustively by the dozens of volumes published on the subject each year. It is a book about humanity and passion and creativity. It is more art than science, more poetry than pedantry. Most of all, it is a book about a father and a son and the blossoming of their relationship as they

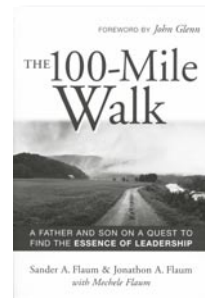
jointly explore the magic and meaning of true leadership. Their journey took them on strolls through the streets of New Orleans and Manhattan, hikes up the Blue Ridge Mountains, long treks on the Appalachian Trail and jogs on the Long Island coast. Their insights can benefit leaders of any cause drawn from members of any generation.

Don't be put off by the book's nine chapter titles, each of which focuses on one of the nine P's of leadership: "People," "Purpose," "Passion," and so on. Do read closely what Sander Flaum, CEO of Flaum Partners, and his son Jonathon Flaum, CEO of WriteMind Communications, have to say throughout the book.

Mindful that his son and his son's peers view leadership and work in different ways than his own, Sander notes pragmatically, "[I]f we do not keep pace with the young leaders waiting to emerge, we will lose the best and the brightest."

Jonathon smashes the CEO stereotype at the outset when he writes, "I have always been drawn first to the poet, artist, philosopher, and radical individualist who is vexed by the meaning and direction of his own life and committed to finding what is right and true, whether or not anybody follows him on the chosen path." In the chapter on passion, he concludes, "Passion, or love for what you do, is a leader's lifeblood."

The leaders chosen to provide the insights in *The 100-Mile Walk* are not household names; they were chosen because they live the principles espoused in the book. Instead of kneeling at the altar of Bill Gates or Jack Welch, say, you'll read thoughts by people such as Bill Toppeta, president of MetLife International ("What you need to know as the leader is what motivates your people, not what motivates you."); Christine Poon, worldwide chairperson of medicines and nutritionals at Johnson & Johnson ("The priceless ingredient of every company is the honor and integrity of its maker."); and



Joseph A. O'Hare, S.J., president emeritus of Fordham University ("Do you want to be president or do you want to *do* president? If you simply want to be president and enjoy all the pomp and circumstances of it, then soon you're irrelevant.").

Father and son almost always come to agree upon what makes a good leader, and they certainly agree that researching and writing the book transformed how they view each other as well as how they try to convey the essence of leadership. As Jonathon writes, "After what seemed like an eternity of trying to convince each other of our rightness, we learned to listen to each other." And Sander ties the bow. "To have a son who is different from you, like my Jonathon is, is such a blessing because you have not just a son, but also a teacher."

—David Treadwell

Bronx D.A.: True Stories From the Sex Crimes and Domestic Violence Unit by Sarena Straus (LAW '95), 304 pages. Fort Lee, N.J.: Barricade Books, 2006. \$22.



It should come as no surprise to anyone with a basic cable package that the near-ubiquitous TV crime drama *Law & Order* is broadcast no fewer than 30 times a week. Taken together with the *CSI* franchise and dozens of literary mystery serials,

Americans are soaked in the implied gore of invented crimes on a near-hourly basis—another sheet-covered corpse, another crime waiting to be wrapped up in one hour or 320 pages.


But even those inured to the devices of fictional crime procedurals may find themselves flinching at the real-life cases confronted by former Bronx Assistant District Attorney Sarena Straus in *Bronx D.A.: True Stories from the Sex Crimes and Domestic Violence Division*.


Straus does well not to allow her readers to glint over the violent details of the crimes she prosecuted. Chapter after chapter, she describes in brutal black and white the cases that tore at her psyche and ultimately drove her from the district attorney's office—the molestation of a poor Dominican boy desperate for a father figure, the rape of a studious sixth-grader at the hands of a teacher, and a shoe-store shooting spree perpetrated by a schizophrenic with 16 bullets and a yen for Air Jordan basketball shoes. Straus is at her best offering a cold appraisal of forensic details, the trajectory of bullets, the locations of knife wounds, the medical examinations of child victims. In those passages, she succeeds at shocking readers with the bare facts of a true-life case, unembellished by literary prose or the lips of grizzled TV actors.

The book, Straus writes, "is a tribute to the assistant D.A.s and their support staff, the physicians, social workers, crime victim advocates who do what I believe is God's work." But she adds that the book is also about the "darker side of the system" that forced her to keep her "own turmoil buried deep within." She opens each chapter with bits of poetry she wrote during her tenure to cope with the stress. They are among the rare places the book wavers from its procedural and legal play-by-play. In one electrifying chapter, Straus describes her brush with a two-timing suitor turned stalker as a cautionary tale about the charisma of violent men. And in another, she writes briefly about how she discovered that her father had also been a victim of child abuse and how that discovery became the reason for her career choice. Ultimately, Straus left the job with an 80 percent conviction rate in a borough where less than 50 percent of cases end in a guilty verdict. And while she no longer works directly with the victims, she ends her book with a prayer that just one person will read her writing and "reach out to one child and save him. ... This I pray with all of my heart."


—Deanna Zammit

Other Books of Interest

Frederick Douglass and the Fourth of July by James Colaiaco (FCRH '67), 256 pages. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. \$24.95. 

The Cold Moon: A Lincoln Rhyme Novel by Jeffery Deaver (LAW '82), 416 pages. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006. \$26. 


The Plot to Save Socrates by Paul Levinson, professor and chair of the communication and media studies department at Fordham, 272 pages. New York: Tor, 2006. \$25.95.

Westchester: The American Suburb edited by Roger Panetta, Ph.D., professor of history at Marymount College of Fordham University, 468 pages. New York: Fordham University Press and the Hudson River Museum, 2006. \$24.95. 

It May Be Forever: An Irish Rebel on the American Frontier a novel by David M. Quinn (GSAS '69), 373 pages. Bloomington, Ind.: AuthorHouse, 2005. \$18.95.

The House: The History of the House of Representatives by Robert V. Remini (FCRH '43), 614 pages. New York: Smithsonian Books, 2006. \$34.95.

Finding God Again: Spirituality for Adults by John J. Shea (GSS '98), 226 pages. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006. \$19.95.

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