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Atlantic: great sea battles, heroic discoveries, titanic storms, and a vast ocean of a million stories, by Simon Winchester (book review)

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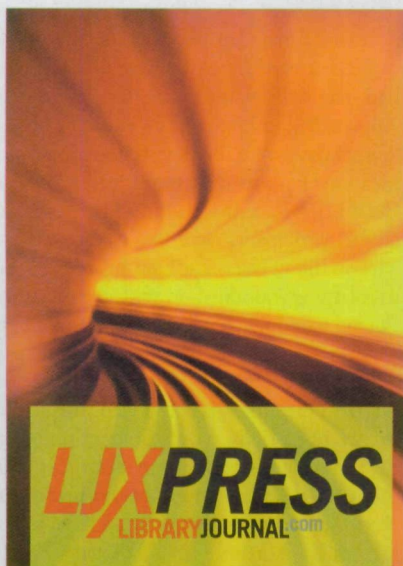


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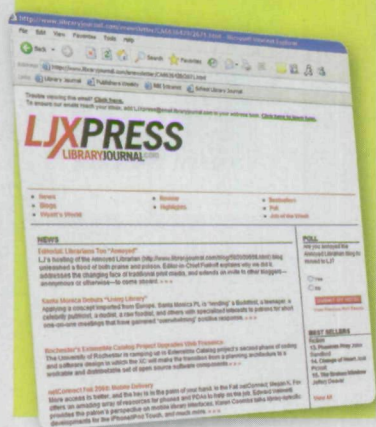
McCallister, Kathleen, Atlantic: great sea battles, heroic discoveries, titanic storms, and a vast ocean of a million stories, by Simon Winchester (book review) (2010). *Library Journal*, 135(14), 122.
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iconic national calamity by alleging that John Wilkes Booth assassinated Abraham Lincoln in part to establish his own importance within a family of theatrical rivals. Titone contends that the feared, idolized, alcoholic but legendary father Junius Brutus Booth favored elder brother Edwin, who bore Junius's talents and faults, over John by taking him on tour, setting the stage for the latter's treacherous act. While most readers will agree that correlation is not causation, Titone's theory (largely based on Booth sister Asia's writings) adds to the narrative while not dismissing the political and cultural reasons for Wilkes Booth's plot—his Confederate and proslavery sympathies have often been noted. Titone portrays wide-ranging milieus from Baltimore to the California gold fields to Panama to New York as important contexts for the Booth family saga. She is most impressive in her use of primary sources and in her literary style, less strong in her use of secondary works, citing general histories in her bibliography but omitting specific studies of Booth. Meticulous readers will want to compare this book with Michael Kaufmann's *American Brutus* and Edward Steers's *Blood on the Moon*, among others. **VERDICT** Titone challenges her readers to view Lincoln's assassination as the result of a dispute between brothers just as the Civil War was at the national level. Her book should attract both scholars and general readers.—**Frederick J. Augustyn Jr., Library of Congress**

Weber, Thomas. Hitler's First War: Adolf Hitler, the Men of the List Regiment, and the First World War. Oxford Univ. Oct. 2010. c.416p. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780199233205. \$34.95. HIST

Weber (modern European, international & global political history, Univ. of Aberdeen, Scotland) challenges Hitler's claim, mostly expressed in *Mein Kampf* (1924) and generally accepted by later historians, that his experiences in World War I shaped both his ideology and subsequent Nazi policy. While little specific information about Hitler's wartime experiences is available, it is possible to reconstruct the history of his unit, the List Regiment, in some detail. Weber by necessity focuses on the men who served with Hitler, but he uses their experiences to assess the impact of the war on the postwar radicalization of German soldiers. His conclusion: it radicalized relatively few soldiers of the List Regiment, and Hitler's postwar claims about his wartime service are largely false. Weber is strongest in re-creating the actual experiences of List Regiment members and in challenging some of the conventional wisdom about the war's long-term impact. His argument that Hitler did not

develop his radical ideas until after the war is less convincing, however, as the fact that Hitler's comrades were not radicalized en masse does not necessarily prove that Hitler fit into the same mold. **VERDICT** Recommended for all general and specialist readers seeking further study of Hitler.—**Frederic Krome, Univ. of Cincinnati Clermont Coll., OH**

Winchester, Simon. Atlantic: Great Sea Battles, Heroic Discoveries, Titanic Storms, and a Vast Ocean of a Million Stories. HarperCollins. Nov. 2010. c.512p. illus. maps. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780061702587. pap. \$27.99. HIST

How does one attempt to write a biography of a subject as old and vast as an ocean? Driven by a lifelong fascination with the Atlantic, Winchester (*The Professor and the Madman*) found inspiration in viewing the ocean and our relationship with it through the categories of Shakespeare's seven ages: infant, schoolboy, lover, soldier, justice, old age, and second childhood. Employing a mixture of history, science, and anecdotes from both sides of the Atlantic, he envisions the ocean's birth and eventual death and explores how its boundaries were discovered and defined, the many ways it has affected the development of human society (artistically, militarily, industrially), and humanity's effect on it in turn. Though the sheer size of the subject obviously limits how much of the Atlantic's "life" can be related in a single volume, Winchester does an excellent job at presenting an extensive collection of the most interesting parts of its existence.

VERDICT Winchester is in fine form, and his typically engaging style creates a vibrant portrait of an ocean that remains endlessly fascinating. Highly recommended, especially for those who have enjoyed the author's previous works. [See Prepub Alert, *LJ* 6/15/10.]—**Kathleen McCallister, Univ. of South Carolina, Columbia**

LAW & CRIME

Dzikansky, Mordecai Z. & Robert Slater. Terrorist Cop: The NYPD Jewish Cop Who Traveled the World to Stop Terrorists. Barricade. Jan. 2011. c.322p. ISBN 9781569804452. \$24.95. LAW

Veteran NYPD homicide detective Dzikansky spent four years in Israel to observe the aftermath of terrorist attacks and cull lessons to help the NYPD prevent and better handle terror threats. He is at his best when recalling his 20 years on the streets of New York, his experience visiting the scenes of dozens of suicide bombings in Israel (among other places), and the personal pain of dealing with and recovering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Although his reports on the aftermath of bombings are difficult to

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