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Frankfurt 2018

*Narrative Nonfiction*

**THE PERFORMANCE OF MIRACLES (S&S)**

*Language, Power, and Alexander Graham Bell's Quest to Cure Deafness*

By Katie Booth

NA: S&S, UK: Abner Stein, Translation: CLA

**The groundbreaking account of the inventor of the telephone, the repression of sign language, and the unintended consequences of his quest to cure deafness.**

Ms due December, 2018, publishing March, 2020

Acquired by Jonathan Cox at Simon & Schuster in a three-publisher auction

Alexander Graham Bell's primary objective in life was to teach the deaf to speak. He believed the deaf could be happy and productive members of society so long as they would abandon sign language, impersonate speech, and learn to read lips. The son of a deaf woman, later married to another, he dedicated his life to his increasingly legendary teaching methods and to inventing technology that could help the deaf even more. Unexpectedly, from these experiments came the world-changing telephone. And, unexpectedly, the telephone would have a profound impact on the deaf, just not in the way anyone could have expected. As Booth says, "Today, the hearing still think of Alexander Graham Bell as an inventor. But in the Deaf world he is seen not as the great figure of liberation that he set out to be but, instead, as the greatest catalyst in deaf oppression. In the Deaf world, he is hated today for what he considered his most important work." The role deafness played in in Bell's world-changing invention has never fully been told just as the debate as to whether sign language is good or bad for the deaf still rages today. **THE PERFORMANCE OF MIRACLES** will tell the profound and tempestuous love story between Bell and his wife Mabel, the dramatic and controversial events surrounding his invention of the telephone, focusing anew on Bell's lifelong—yet deeply flawed—pursuit of a cure for deafness, while unraveling the ways in which we perceive (and often try to fix) difference.

Katie Booth teaches writing and journalism at the University of Pittsburgh and she comes from a family of deaf people, though she is hearing. Booth has an MFA in nonfiction writing from the University of Pittsburgh and her writing has appeared or is forthcoming in *Harper's Magazine*, *The Atavist Magazine*, and many others. She lives in Pittsburgh. This is her first book.

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**AMERICAN CIPHER (Penguin Press)**

*Bowe Bergdahl and the U.S. Tragedy in Afghanistan*

By Matt Farwell and Michael Ames

*Co-Represented with Chris Parris-Lamb of The Gernert Company*

NA: Penguin Press, UK: Headline, Translation, CLA

**An unforgettable account of the defining story of the Afghan war.**

MS is available, publishing March, 2019

Acquired by Emily Cunningham for Penguin Press in a ten publisher auction

Acquired by Headline in the UK in a four publisher auction

Private First Class Bowe Bergdahl left his platoon's base in eastern Afghanistan in the early hours of June 30, 2009. Since that day, easy answers to the many questions surrounding his case--why did he leave his post? What kinds of efforts were made to recover him from the Taliban? And why, facing a court martial, did he plead guilty to the serious charges against him?--have proved elusive, until now. Based on years of exclusive reporting drawing on dozens of sources throughout the military, government, and Bergdahl's family, friends, and fellow soldiers, *American Cipher* is the riveting account of the nearly decade-old Bergdahl quagmire, as illuminating an episode as we have as we seek the larger truths of how the United States lost its way in Afghanistan. The book tells the parallel stories of a young man's halting coming of age and a nation stalled in an unwinnable war, revealing the fallout that ensued when the two collided: a fumbling recovery effort that suppressed intelligence on Bergdahl's true location and bungled multiple opportunities to bring him back sooner; a homecoming that served to deepen the nation's already-vast political fissure; a trial that cast judgment on not only the defendant, but most everyone involved. The book's beating heart is Bergdahl himself--an idealistic, misguided soldier onto whom a nation projected the political and emotional complications of service. Above it all, *American Cipher* is the heartbreaking story of a naïve young man who thought he could fix the world and wound up the tool of forces far beyond his understanding. Matt Farwell has written for *The New York Times*, *Vanity Fair*, *Rolling Stone*, *Men's Journal*, *Maxim* and other publications. He was an Army infantryman for five years, including sixteen months in Afghanistan. Michael Ames is a regular contributor to *Newsweek* and *Harper's*. His work has also appeared in *The Atlantic*, *Slate*, *The Daily Beast*, and *The Believer*.

**THE GHOSTSHIPS OF ARCHANGEL (Viking)**

*An Abandoned Convoy, Hitler's Navy, and the Race to Arctic Russia*

By William Geroux

NA: Viking, UK: Abner Stein, Translation: CLA

**The true story of four American supply ships in 1942, a part of the doomed PQ-17 convoy, abandoned by their British military escort, who escape a German assault by sneaking into the ice floes of the North Pole before resuming their dangerous mission to Russia.**

Acquired by Wendy Wolf at Viking

MS is available, publishing May, 2019

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In the summer of 1942 the alliance that would win WWII was far from certain. To satisfy Stalin's demands for US participation in the fight against the Germans, Roosevelt and Churchill organized a daring series of supply convoys to make the treacherous "Murmansk Run" from the US, across the North Atlantic and through a gauntlet of German air and naval forces to Soviet Russia. The convoys were staffed by merchant mariners, men unfit for military duty, and crewmembers from all corners of the world, all aboard aging rust-bucket ships under threat of icebergs, bombers, and U-boats. In July, when the 17<sup>th</sup> convoy (PQ-17) began to cross the North Atlantic, Hitler insisted his navy send their fearsome battleship *Turpitz* to annihilate it and their armed escort. Fearing the loss of irreplaceable warships the British Admiralty ordered the fleet to scatter and leave PQ-17 undefended. Churchill would come to call it "the most melancholy episode of the war," but as the Germans began to hunt down the ships in the convoy by sea and by air, four of the ships slipped into the polar ice where they hoped to escape notice, getting so close to the North Pole their compasses began to spin in useless circles. They hid out the bombardment, disguised their hulls with white paint and bed-sheets, before resuming their dangerous mission to the Soviet port of Archangel and, hopefully, back home again. William Geroux has unearthed exceptional source material and first-hand accounts, and has interviewed at length the last living American member of the PQ-17 convoy. This was a brief moment of military cooperation between the US and the Soviet Union before the onset of the Cold War. By the author of *The Mathews Men* (Viking, 2016)

**THE SECOND CHANCE CLUB (HMH)**

*On the Front Lines with the New Orleans District of Probation and Parole*  
by Jason Hardy

NA: HMH, UK: Abner Stein, Translation: CLA

**A memoir of Hardy's four years as a parole and probation officer in New Orleans where he gained a unique and vital perspective on how felons re-enter (or fail to re-enter) society.**

MS is available in December, 2018, publishing February, 2020

The Second Chance Club is a derogatory nickname for the New Orleans District of Probation and Parole. In a state that incarcerates more people per capita than any other in America (and, therefore, the World) it was not known for giving second chances. Who deserves to stay out of prison and who has to go back behind bars? These were questions he felt motivated to answer shortly after responding to a classified ad, desperate to find employment resembling a career after what seemed to him like failures as a high school teacher, stints in retail and hospitality, even an MFA degree. Hardy started his work feeling that he knew how to make a helpful difference in the lives of his charges, as untrained as he was. He quickly fell into the camp of the "social workers," those who believed that prisoners being released simply needed to be understood in order to get back on their feet. Surely there must have been a good reason they missed the job interview. Glaring at them from across office were the "cowboys," those who believed that prisoners just needed a kick in the ass. Jail was a tool to use and compassion was a waste of time. In time, through Hardy's experiences on the street and in his office, through pained, tragic, desperate, and even uproarious encounters with his colleagues, offenders, Assistant District Attorneys, Public Defenders, and Judges alike, Jason is transformed, all while offering a fascinating glimpse into the front lines of criminal justice reform. He learns that certainty about how to help those who can't help themselves can be as fleeting as the grace he might sometimes witness through – or even in spite – of his efforts. Hardy has an MFA in creating writing and now works for the FBI.

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**GOLIATH (S&S)**

*How Monopoly Power Secretly Took Over the World*  
by Matt Stoller

NA: S&S, UK: Abner Stein, Translation: CLA

**A revelatory chronicle of the rise of concentrated financial power and the erosion of democracy.**

Acquired by Ben Loehnen at S&S in a five-publisher auction  
MS available November, 2018, publishing June, 2019

Stoller's synthesis of 20th Century political and economic history has produced an explosive new way of understanding the origins and potential outcomes of our current political and economic reality. What many political leaders, columnists and cable talk show hosts forget is that billionaires once ran our government and their reckless and self-dealing policies were inspired, in part, by the rise of Fascism in Italy and Germany, and which led to the Great Depression. The political motivation to stop them came from populist politicians who understood that, in the words of Louis Brandeis "We may have democracy, or we may have wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can't have both." In standing up to concentrated financial power, the political figures of the day presided over the New Deal and created the middle class. But in the wake of Vietnam and Watergate the Democratic Party ushered in a transformation of political priorities that favored monopolies and allowed banks, for the first time in a generation, to operate outside of the political arena. This led to profound concentrations of financial power, the troubling realities of the 2008 financial crisis, and a Bank bailout that saw no prosecutions but permitted the foreclosure of 9 million American homes. Americans, in despair, turned to Donald Trump. Cries of a resurgent populist agenda are dangerously misplaced however. Because just as there's an appearance that populism has animated Trump's political success, monopoly power and a concentration of wealth create dangerous pressures on our Democratic system.

**HOME BAKED (HMH)**

*My Mom, Marijuana, and the Stoning of San Francisco*  
By Alia Volz

NA: HMH, UK: Abner Stein, Translation: CLA

**A memoir of weed, weirdos, and the meaning of family in 1970s San Francisco**

Proposal is available, ms due May, 2019, publishing May, 2020  
Acquired by Lauren Wein at HMH in a pre-empt

During the 70s in San Francisco, Alia Volz's mother ran the underground Sticky Fingers Bakery, delivering upwards of 10,000 illegal marijuana brownies per month throughout the circus-like atmosphere of a city in the throes of major change. She exchanged psychic readings with Alia's future father, and thereafter had a partner in the business and life. "Eccentricity was à la mode, but nobody could out-weird my parents." Each were devoted to the occult—her mother preferred the I Ching and Tarot while her father was a graduate of the Berkeley Psychic Institute—and they regularly consulted the oracles for information on the police. At a time

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when marijuana was as illicit as heroin, they ingeniously hid themselves in plain sight, parading through town in bright and elaborate outfits. With the goods wrapped in intricately hand-designed packaging and tucked into Alia's stroller, they navigated through the burgeoning scenes of the day, from Black Power to Gay Liberation. But the stars were not aligned forever and, after leaving the city and a shoulda-seen-it-coming divorce, Alia and her Mom returned to San Francisco in the mid-80s, this time using the Sticky Fingers baking techniques and distribution channels to help frontline activists provide medical marijuana to their friends and former customers now suffering the depredations of AIDS. By turns exhilarating, hilarious and heartbreaking, HOME BAKED is full of loose screws, radicals, and oddballs. It is "a yarn about a strong woman at the top of her game, one who chooses adventure over stability and isn't somehow punished for it. It's about magic, both when it seems to be at your fingertips and when it fails you. It's about unfathomable loss and the will to survive. It's about place, that elusive quality that gets under your skin. And, yeah, it's also a zany, comical, stoner adventure." Alia's writing has been chosen by Leslie Jamison for *The Best American Essays, 2017* and has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Tin House*, *The Threepenny Review*, *the Rumpus*, among many others.

*Natural History & Science*

**WHEN THE EARTH HAD TWO MOONS (Custom House)**

*A Strange and Wonderful Journey Through the Night Sky and Beyond*

By Erik Asphaug, Ph.D.

NA & UK: Custom House, Translation: CLA (China/Chinese-World Books, Russia/Alpina)

**A stunningly original hypothesis about our moon's formation is a window into the origins of the Universe, and its implications for life beyond Earth.**

Acquired by Geoff Shandler at Custom House on an exclusive submission.  
Ms due December, 2018, publishing July, 2019

The Norwegian-born Dr. Erik Asphaug is an award-winning planetary scientist widely known for his provocative theory that the earth once had two moons. This forms the core of a fascinating book that showcases the origins of our moon, our galaxy, the universe, and the possibility for life beyond Earth. With trillions of games of chance going on in the Universe, building planets by chaos and blind luck, any planet you think of not only can exist, but probably does. The first life took hold on Earth in the midst of a calamitous bombardment. Did it take hold despite this, or because of this? To know more, we have to know the Moon. "The smaller of our Solar System's bodies – Pluto is smaller than the Moon, for example, and the Moon is just 1% the mass of the Earth – represent poorly-known but potentially revelatory stages on the precarious road to planet formation, where large bodies grow from smaller ones, one collision at a time. They are snapshots of the complex history that made the planets. Like a messy bakery, planet formation has left behind scattered pieces..." This book is about the fate of planets, then and now, and will show readers the profound ways in which their workings are intimately connected to the meaning of life. Along the way they will be introduced to the mind-bending discoveries made by recent spaceflights and obtain a visceral understanding of planetary diversity. Dr. Erik Asphaug is the chair of Planetary Science at Arizona State University (which has the largest planetary science program in the country).

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Fiction

**THE CROSSED OUT NOTEBOOK (Scribner)**

*a novel*

by Nicolás Jacobone

NA: Scribner, UK: Corsair, Translation (China/Citic Sight, France/Editions Sonatine, Germany/Heyne Hardcore, Italy/Bompiani, Portugal/Presença, Spain/Reservoir)

**This debut novel from an Academy Award-winning screenwriter is a psychological thriller about a screenwriter kidnapped by a world-famous director and commanded that he write for him a masterpiece. (In Spanish)**

Acquired by Daniel Loedel at Scribner at auction. Acquired in Spain, France, Italy, and China in a pre-empt  
Ms due December, 2018, publishing July, 2019

Pablo, a failed Argentine novelist-turned-screenwriter, has been kidnapped by “the greatest Latin American film director of all time,” and is kept in a basement where he is expected to work, day after day, on what is expected to be a great, world-changing script. *El Cuaderno Tachado (The Crossed Out Notebook)* is Pablo’s diary of this time; being brought food by a maid; being threatened with a gun; vociferously arguing with the director about what he’s written the previous day. But as Pablo begins to suffer writers block on the script his diary transforms with revelations about his imaginative life, the nature of writing novels versus screenplays, the Beatles, the scriptwriting greats and the history of cinema, to masturbation. “It’s incredible,” he says, “the amount of things I can do in this basement that are not writing the script I’m supposed to be writing.” Suspenseful even while being determinedly unrealistic, it might remind some of the absurdist fiction of Beckett or George Saunders. *El Cuaderno Tachado* emerges as a short, crazy ode to writers, or any artist, whose brilliance doesn’t come easily. (In Spanish). Nicolás Jacobone shared an Academy Award and Golden Globe for co-writing *Birdman*. His is the author of the book of stories *ALGÚN CRISTO*. He co-wrote the screenplays for *Océano*, which was directed by Pascual Sisto; *Biutiful*, which was directed by Alejandro G. Iñárritu, and nominated for ‘Best Original Screenplay’ by the Cinema Writers Circle Awards in Spain, the Goya Awards, and the Satellite Awards; *The Last Elvis*, which was directed by Armando Bo, and awarded the ‘Silver Condor for Best Original Screenplay’ by the Argentine Film Critics Association.

**VAGABOND STORIES (Cuentos Vagabundos) (On Submission)**

by Nicolás Jacobone

A collection of stories by the author of *THE CROSSED OUT NOTEBOOK*, in Spanish. With a selection translated into English.

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*Middle Grade and YA Nonfiction*

**HIDDEN SYSTEMS (Random House Graphic)**

*A Graphic History of Water, Wires, Waste, and the Web.*

By Dan Nott

NA: Random House Graphic, UK: Abner Stein, Translation: CLA

The hidden history and geography of how our world really works, in comics format.

Proposal is available, MS due Spring 2020, publishing Spring 2021

Acquired by Gina Gagliano in a five publisher auction

The world we live in is stitched together by systems we often can't see and which we know very little about. Our lives depend on these systems and yet their architecture, their operation, and the differences between how they were first conceived versus how they've come to function reveal a surprisingly rich and intricate world right beneath our noses. Taken together – how we get our water, how our world is wired for power, the way we handle waste and recycling, and the little known infrastructure of the internet – we can discover the hidden history and geography of interlocking networks that make our lives possible and keep our worlds moving smoothly. HIDDEN SYSTEMS, in a beautifully designed and factually rich comics format, will be full of information, insight and discovery for readers of all ages. Random House Graphic is a brand new imprint and is a part of Random House Books for Children. HIDDEN SYSTEMS will be published as a YA title but with the full expectation of an all ages readership.

Dan Nott's work has been featured in THE NIB, SEVEN DAYS, Fusion's GRAPHIC CULTURE section, and been featured in MEDIUM's Editor's Picks, and in the WASHINGTONPOST.com.

**Book 1 of a 2 book series EPIC FAILS  
THE WRIGHT BROTHERS (Roaring Brook)**

*Nose-Diving Into History*

by Ben Thompson and Erik Slader

NA & UK: Roaring Brook, Translation: CLA

**A hilarious nonfiction look at two of history's most epic "failures": the Wright brothers, whose countless crashes ultimately led to groundbreaking success.**

Although Orville and Wilbur Wright are celebrated today as heroes for their revolutionary contributions to science and engineering—they are acknowledged as the first men to successfully achieve powered, piloted flight—their success was hard-earned. (Spoiler alert: there were a lot of nosedives involved.) In fact, it took the self-taught engineers years of work and dozens of crashes before they managed a single twelve-second flight!

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In this first installment of the brand new Epic Fails series, Ben Thompson and Erik Slader take readers through the Wright brothers' many mishaps and misadventures as they paved the way for modern aviation.

**Book 2**

**THE RACE TO SPACE (Roaring Brook)**

*Countdown to Lift Off*

by Ben Thompson and Erik Slader

NA & UK: Roaring Brook, Translation: CLA

**In this second installment of the Epic Fails series, explore the many failures that made up the Space Race, paving the way for humanity's eventual success at reaching the stars.**

Today, everyone is familiar with Neil Armstrong's famous words as he first set foot on the moon: "one small step for man; one giant leap for mankind." He made it look easy, but America's journey to the moon was anything but simple. In 1957, when the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, the world's first satellite, into orbit, America had barely crossed the starting line of the great Space Race. Later that year, our first attempt was such a failure that the media nicknamed it "Kaputnik." Still, we didn't give up. With each failure, we gleaned valuable information about what went wrong, and how to avoid it in the future. So we tried again. And again. And each time we failed, we failed a little bit better.

*Backlist*

**RACEHOSS (Scribner)**

*Big Emma's Boy*

By Albert "Race" Sample

"A timeless classic" (*San Antonio Express-News*), about a man who spent seventeen years in a brutal Texas prison plantation before undergoing a remarkable transformation.

NA: Scribner, UK: Abner Stein, Translation: CLA  
MS is available, publishing May, 2018

**THE BIG ONES (Doubleday)**

*How Natural Disasters Have Shaped Us (and What We Can Do About Them)*

By Lucy Jones, Ph. D.

**A surprising history of natural disasters, their impact on our culture, and new ways of thinking about the ones to come by the foremost authority in her field.**

NA: Doubleday, UK: Icon, Translation: CLA (China/SSTE, Korea/Nulwa  
Books are available, publishing April, 2018