

JUST PUBLISHED

**RUTH BEHAR '77 AND HUMBERTO MAYOL**  
*An Island Called Home: Returning to Jewish Cuba*  
(Rutgers University Press, 2007)



As a child of five, Professor of Anthropology Behar left Cuba with her Jewish family, but as she grew up in the United States, she continued to wonder about the Jews who stayed behind. She wanted to know more about why the people remained in Cuba and what traces were left there of the Jewish presence, including cemeteries, synagogues, and Torahs. Behar was curious if anyone was still taking care of this legacy. She wanted to find out if Jewish memories had survived the years of revolutionary atheism. Her insightful book explores what happens when she returns to Cuba and reveals the moving and personal stories of the Cuban Jews she meets. Havana-based photographer Mayol, who traveled with her, contributes a rich selection of sensitive pictures.

**JOSHUA DAVID BELLIN '87**  
*Medicine Bundle: Indian Sacred Performance and American Literature, 1824–1932*  
(University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008)



Bellin explores the complex issues surrounding Indian sacred performance in its varied and intimate relationships with texts and images by both Indians and whites. From the 1820s to the 1930s, Christian missionaries and federal agents launched a continent-wide assault against Indian sacred dance, song, ceremony, and healing ritual in an attempt to transform Indian peoples into American citizens. Nevertheless, Native peoples continued to perform their sacred traditions and to resist the foreign religions imposed on them, while they also developed new practices that par-took of both. At the same time, some whites began to explore Indian performance with interest, and even to promote Indian sacred traditions as a source of power for their own society. The varieties of Indian performance played a formative role in American culture and identity during a critical phase in the nation's development.

**SUSAN FREINKEL '80**  
*American Chestnut: The Life, Death, and Rebirth of a Perfect Tree*  
(University of California Press, 2007)



Freinkel tells the moving and dramatic story of the steadfast optimists who refused to let go of a cultural icon, the American chestnut, which was one of America's most common, valued, and beloved trees, found in the forests from Georgia to Maine. In the early 20th century, an exotic plague swept through American chestnut forests; within 40 years, the blight had killed close to four billion trees and left the species on the brink of extinction. Freinkel skillfully combines history, science, and personal observation as she recounts efforts to save the chestnut through methods ranging from classical plant breeding to cutting-edge gene technology. She shares fascinating stories of unconventional characters who have fought for the tree for a century, despite obstacles or skeptics.

**MELODY MOEZZI '01**  
*War on Error: Real Stories of American Muslims*  
(University of Arkansas Press, 2007)



In her introduction, Moezzi writes: "I decided to write this book to tell the stories of my fellow American Muslims, stories I felt weren't being told. I wanted to affirm the experiences of Muslim Americans as American experiences, as grounded in the American dream and the American ethic as any others." Moezzi brings together 12 very different Americans: from a rapper of Korean and Egyptian decent to a bisexual Sudanese American to a converted white woman from Colorado living in Cairo and wearing the hijab. These thoughtful individuals are drawn to the logic, compassion, and tolerance they find in Muslim teachings and are horrified that the religion has become associated with terrorism post 9/11. Moezzi, an American Muslim of Iranian descent, finds that her underlying assumption that "faith is greater than dogma" is strengthened as she learns more about her religion and confronts her own biases and blind spots. — David Low

OF NOTE

In *The Graving Dock* (Thomas Dunne Books/St. Martin's Minotaur, 2007), a follow-up to his Edgar Award-nominated novel *Red Hook*, **GABRIEL COHEN '82** brings back Jack Leightner, a detective with Brooklyn South Homicide in New York City. Leightner must help solve the mystery of a homemade coffin that drifts ashore in New York harbor, containing the body of a boy with the letters G.I. written on his forehead. Leightner's pursuit of the killer takes him on a whirlwind tour of hidden parts of New York harbor.

NONFICTION

**LAWRENCE ALSCHULER '63**, *The Psychopolitics of Liberation: Political Consciousness from a Jungian Perspective* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)

**STEPHEN BERMAN '68, MD**, *Getting It Right for Children: Stories of Pediatric Care and Advocacy* (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2008)

**CASEY NELSON BLAKE '78**, *The Arts of Democracy: Art, Public Culture, and the State* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007)

**JENNIFER CLARK '95** and **SUSAN CHRISTOPHERSON**, *Remaking Regional Economies: Power, Labor, and Firm Strategies in the Knowledge Economy* (Routledge, 2007)

**ETHAN DE SEIFE '95**, *This Is Spinal Tap* (Wallflower Press, 2007)

**CHARLES ELBOT '69** and **DAVID FULTON**, *Building an Intentional School Culture: Excellence in Academics and Character* (Corwin Press, 2007)

**JOSEPH ENTIN '91**, *Sensational Modernism: Experimental Fiction and Photography in Thirties America* (University of North Carolina Press, 2007)

**SANDRA EUGSTER '82**, *Notes from Nethers: Growing Up in a Sixties Commune* (Academy Chicago Publishers, 2007)

**ELLEN FEDER '89**, *Family Bonds: Genealogies of Race and Gender* (Oxford University Press, 2007)

**TOMIE HAHN PHD '97**, *Sensational Knowledge: Embodying Culture through Japanese Dance* (Wesleyan University Press, 2007)

**DAVID MAJOR '60** and **JOHN MAJOR**, *A Huguenot on the Hackensack: David Demarest and His Legacy* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007)

**GABRIEL PAQUETTE '99**, *Enlightenment, Governance, and Reform in Spain and Its Empire, 1759–1808* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008)

**SARAH POSNER '86**, *God's Profits: Faith, Fraud, and the Republican Crusade for Values Voters* (PoliPointPress, 2008)

**CHRISTIAN PRELLWITZ '02**, *A Guide to Bouldering in the Telluride and West End Areas of Southwest Colorado* (Mountain World Media, 2007)

**TAMAR Y. ROTHENBERG '86**, *Presenting America's World: Strategies of Innocence in National Geographic Magazine, 1888–1945* (Ashgate, 2007)

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If you are a Wesleyan graduate, faculty member, or parent with a new publication, please let us know by contacting David Low '76 at [dlow@wesleyan.edu](mailto:dlow@wesleyan.edu) or at Wesleyan magazine, Office of Public Affairs, Wesleyan University/South College, Middletown, CT 06459.

# BETWEEN THE LINES

## Witnessing Evil Up Close

For *A Crime So Monstrous: Face-to-Face with Modern-Day Slavery* (Free Press, 2008), **E. Benjamin Skinner '98** traveled around the globe to provide a dramatic exposé on the inner workings of the modern-day slave trade.

In theory, I knew what a slave was before I ever met one. A slave was someone forced to work under threat of violence for no pay beyond subsistence. In theory, I knew that I could not free every slave I found in bondage; instead I hoped to write a book that might save many more.

But my theories didn't mean very much to a young woman, offered to me in trade for a used car in an underground brothel in Bucharest. She had been hastily prepared for sale by her pimp, but her tears smeared mascara which he had applied in a vain attempt to conceal her Down syndrome. A second trafficker gripped one of her arms tightly; her other arm bore a net of fresh, angry slashes. I later reported her situation to the Romanian police, but they expressed little interest.

At first, an academic curiosity drew me to the subject; it was only later, in moments of sheer horror like that, when slavery became anything but academic. The seed of *A Crime So Monstrous* was sewn in 2001 when I read that there were more slaves than at any point in human history. The most commonly cited global estimate—27 million—seemed like a staggering figure. But in the end it didn't mean very much unless I could understand what one person's slavery *meant*.

So I spent much of the next five years in civil war zones, urban child markets, trafficking shelters, brothels, and slave quarries. I went undercover when necessary to talk to slave traders; but the most riveting stories came from those traffickers, slaves, and survivors who had nothing to gain by opening up except perhaps to sate a need to reveal themselves for the first time—"the oldest human longing," as Zora Neale Hurston called it.

Modern-day abolitionists also revealed themselves, displaying a broad spectrum of motives. Love drove some, like the Romanian shelter operator who took in freed sex slaves and took on traffickers despite constant threats. Ideology ginned up others, like the Marxist

cabal in northern India who planted red flags in quarries and gave slaves the courage to resist their generations-old bondage. Misplaced faith drove a few, like the Evangelical American, whom I watched pay rebels to "redeem" three thousand southern Sudanese, whose slave status was dubious.

My own motives evolved through contact with survivors. That stunning global statistic first drove me into the subject, and then ambition to write a book fueled my fire. But then I met Muong in southern Sudan. Muong, like me, was 27 and figuring out what to do with the rest of his life. Very unlike me, he had spent the first part of that life in bondage.

Then I met Tatiana. A young woman whom Dutch authorities had narrowly rescued from brutal sex slavery, Tatiana had not only participated in the prosecution of her traffickers, but she then went undercover to infiltrate brothels to find other trafficked women and to help them to seize their freedom. Then I met Gonoo. A third-generation slave in a quarry in northern India, he and his family lived in mortal fear of their master, a serial killer. Then I met Williathe. Smuggled into America at age 9, Williathe was held in domestic bondage in a \$400,000 home in suburban Miami. She found her way to freedom, and while two of her captors fled the country rather than face prison terms or even the death penalty, Williathe performed the ultimate act of defiance by getting an education and refusing to be a victim.

Then I met Litanne. Early one morning in a remote village in the highlands of southern Haiti, Litanne came to me and said that her daughter was being held in domestic slavery in Port-au-Prince. A week later, flanked by two big men, I helped to rescue Litanne's daughter, Camsease. After mother held daughter for the first time in three years, I offered what I hoped would keep the girl out of bondage: a modest scholarship to a local school. The cost to me was \$87 per year. Three years on, I keep tabs on her through a local aid organization. She now can read and aspires to be a doctor.

And, of course, I met, however fleetingly, the young woman in the Bucharest brothel. In the absence of my intervention or that of the police, it is possible that she freed herself the only way she knew how, by ending her life. If not, she is still in hell.

Still, I am heartened that a few courageous groups work every day to save others like her, using holistic methods that not only emancipate slaves, but eradicate bondage. You can read about two of them on [www.acrimesomonstrous.com](http://www.acrimesomonstrous.com).

**Born in Wisconsin, Ben Skinner has reported on diverse topics from five continents for *Newsweek International*, *Travel and Leisure*, and other publications. He now lives in Brooklyn.**

