

nam War). Kaiser bills this as “the first [Kennedy assassination book] written by a professional historian who has researched the available archives,” and his attention to detail and use of recently released FBI and CIA files put this analysis ahead of many of its fellows. Kaiser focuses on the rantalizing testimony of Cuban exile Silvia Odio, who claimed to have met Lee Harvey Oswald in the company of Cuban activists, and on the U.S. government’s efforts to kill Castro and Robert Kennedy’s crusade against organized crime. By taking Oswald’s guilt as a given and focusing on the people he crossed paths with and their motives and connections, Kaiser mostly succeeds in avoiding complex and narrative-derailing forensic discussions. This is a deeply disturbing look at a national tragedy, and Kaiser’s sober tone and reasoned analysis may well convince some in the Oswald-was-a-lone-nut camp. 30 b&w illus. not seen by *PW*. (Mar.)

Comedy at the Edge: How Stand-up in the 1970s Changed America

RICHARD ZOGLIN. Bloomsbury,
\$24.95 (256p) ISBN 978-1-58234-624-3

Theater and TV critic Zoglin steps into the spotlight to deliver mirthful material also worthy of applause. A senior *Time* writer-editor who covered the magazine’s showbiz beat for 20 years, Zoglin once did major pieces on Carson, Cosby, Letterman, Seinfeld and others. Now he offers a comedy chronicle of laugh makers from the mid-1960s to the early ’80s with entertaining excerpts and funny one-liners. In an opening chapter capturing the charisma and revolutionary impact of Lenny Bruce, he notes, “What the younger comedians who were influenced by him brought was the discipline and craftsmanship that Bruce lacked. They were better actors and more accomplished writers.” The curtain then goes up on a merry mob of iconoclastic innovators: Andy Kaufman, Richard Lewis (“I left my shrink too soon; I had to take an incomplete”), George Carlin and “the seven dirty words,” the raw “racial anger” of Richard Pryor, Robert Klein (“Now you can get every record ever recorded!”) and many more. The book’s centerpiece is a potent profile of Albert Brooks, detailing

the lampoons, conflicts and compromises of his now-forgotten standup career. Although some subjects (Steve Martin, Mel Brooks, David Letterman) were initially reluctant to be interviewed, Zoglin’s conversations with numerous top talents enabled him to add fresh quotations to his extensive research through books, magazines and liner notes. Always highlighting how these comics “transformed the culture,” Zoglin on standup is standout. (Feb. 1)

The Kitchen Readings: Untold Stories of Hunter S. Thompson

MICHAEL CLEVERLY AND BOB BRAUDIS. Harper Perennial, \$13.95 paper
(304p) ISBN 978-0-06-115928-2

According to the couple of old Woody Creek buddies of Hunter S. Thompson’s (aka “Doc”) who compiled this ramshackle selection of anecdotes about the gonzo practitioner, the kitchen at Doc’s was the favored place for conversation since the living room had devolved into a “squalid, fetid, pigsty.” Thompson’s legend as a fire-breathing, vituperative hellion had spread far and wide—due in no small part to his own self-promotion of it—but many old-time residents of the Colorado mountain town where he holed up for several decades were fiercely protective of their resident hell-raiser. That attitude is clearly represented by this book’s pair of authors, an artist and a sheriff, who relate numerous tales of paranoid and wanton destruction (often involving cocaine, firearms and too many glasses of Chivas) with the same indulgence one reserves for a dangerously eccentric relative. The book keeps the stargazing to a minimum and mostly presents Thompson the man—one who was fortunate he could write because he comes off here as pretty useless at day-to-day life. The authors recount everything from Thompson’s invention of shotgun golf to the reason he needed all those peacocks around. While Cleverly and Braudis try to puncture the media myth of Thompson the Indestructible (on his aborted attempt at covering Vietnam, they sardonically note that he seemed to “only like danger when he was the most dangerous person in the room”), it’s a gentle ribbing; we should all have friends as generous and forgiving as Thompson clearly did. (Feb.)

Feminists Say the Darndest Things: A Politically Incorrect Professor Confronts “Womyn” on Campus

MIKE ADAMS. Sentinel, \$24.95 (224p)
ISBN 978-1-59523-042-3

In *Welcome to the Ivory Tower of Babel: Confessions of a Conservative College Professor*, Adams lampooned liberals, campus radicalism and the academic left. At the outset of his second jaunt across the campus, the highly opinionated professor of criminal justice at the University of North Carolina–Wilmington explains his reason for targeting feminists: “I want to find out why they hate us.” Unleashing salvos of sarcasm, he collects his correspondence addressed to feminist students, professors, activists and administrators, including some letters never mailed (probably for the best). Claiming that “feminist scholar” is an oxymoron, Adams asserts that feminists have no sense of humor, are the biggest censors on college campuses, lack the courage to act as individuals, engage in “widespread academic and personal dishonesty” and attempt to solve problems by changing society rather than their own behavior. Ridiculing “feminist-sponsored masturbation workshops,” he notes, “Men are fully capable of masturbating without taking a seminar.... For campus feminists, it’s another excuse to seek funding from the university administration.” Adams’s caustic survey of the “feminist worldview” is certain to stir up controversy when his conservative radio promotional campaign gets underway. (Feb. 14)

The Last Flight of the Scarlet Macaw: One Woman's Fight to Save the World's Most Beautiful Bird

BRUCE BARCOTT. Random, \$25.95
(336p) ISBN 978-1-4000-6293-5

Barcott (*The Measure of a Mountain*) relates the dramatic and heart-rending story of one woman’s struggle to save the scarlet macaw in the tiny country of Belize. Sharon Matola, an eccentric American who directs the Belize Zoo, learned in 1999 that a Canadian power company planned to build a dam that would destroy the habitat of the 200 scarlet macaws remaining in Belize. Helped by native Belizeans and the Natural Resources