the war on terror. He demonstrates how both Western counter-terrorism efforts and jihadists have impeded organizations such as Medecins Sans Frontières (MSF), aka Doctors Without Borders, and the United Nations. The book covers various nations on the conflict's front lines, including Syria, which has become the ultimate test for aid agencies, and Afghanistan, where in 2015 a U.S. bombing raid hit an MSF hospital. In Pakistan, Gill discusses how the U.S. hunt for Osama bin Laden interfered with polio eradication efforts. Elsewhere, he shows how U.S. counterterrorism laws have constrained American aid effortsan effect called the "chill factor." He also provides a history of the international humanitarian movement and its pivotal organizations, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross. Not without hope, he shares the stories of aid workers still standing up for neutrality within war zones. Gill's deft analysis and reporting provide an enlightening account of a new world disorder, where the "civilized principles supposedly governing a war" have been forfeited. (June)

Invisible Influence: The Hidden Forces that Shape Behavior

Jonah Berger. Simon & Schuster, \$26.99 (272p) ISBN 978-1-4767-5969-2

Expanding on the ideas explored in his 2013 bestseller, Contagious, Berger offers an engaging guide to the concept of social influence. He examines how opposing categories of socially motivated behaviorimitation and differentiation—combine to create complex cultural patterns. He shows, for example, the imperceptible communal nudges behind baby-naming trends, racial achievement gaps, and group decision-making at work. Though Berger teaches marketing, his book appeals to readers beyond the M.B.A.s. Ultimately, the focus is on applied psychology. "We like things that are moderately similar," he says, "blending the allure of novelty with the comfort of the familiar." Some of his points are familiar from Psychology 101: familiarity increases attraction, stereotypes are shortcuts used to process new information. But unlike the writing in the average psych textbook, Berger's prose is consistently entertaining, applying science to real life

[Q&A]

PW TALKS WITH PAMELA HAAG

The Ghost of Rifles Past

In The Gunning of America (Basic; pub month, Apr.; Reviews, Feb. 29), Haag offers an unconventional perspective on why gun ownership is so pervasive in the United States.

How did this book come to be?

I was lured into the topic by a ghost story. When I was a graduate student, I heard the story of Sarah Winchester, daughter-in-law of the rifle king Oliver Winchester. Legend holds that Sarah was a spiritualist who thought herself tormented by the ghosts of all the Winchester rifle casualties. I was captivated by Sarah and started researching her in 2007, but set the project aside. Then, after the Sandy Hook massacre, my mind returned to Sarah. But this time, I thought that maybe I was starting with the wrong Winchester. Her ghost story was a mystery, but perhaps the untold history of the gun industry was even more of a mystery. So I began to follow the money of the gun industry. How would you summarize your book?

The Gunning of America fundamentally revises the history of guns and gun culture in America. By looking at the gun industry archives, it shows



through the story of the gun industry a haunting tale of Sarah Winchester, the rifle heiress, who is a counterlegend to the gunslinger legends, a legend of gun conscience born out of Oliver Winchester's gun ambition. What are Americans' biggest mis-

conceptions about gun culture? That we were simply born a gun cul-

ture; it was made, not born. That we have always "loved" guns and had a lot of them; gun mystique really grew in the postfrontier world of the 1900s. That the gun culture is all about the Second Amendment; it's also about the gun industry that invented, patented, mass produced, marketed, distributed, and sold guns. And that Americans have an exceptional relationship to guns as a nation of cowboys; among other things, the gun industry first survived not by selling to American civilians but by selling internationally, so Americans are not the only ones with gun violence legacies of one kind or another. Is demythologizing the gun that won

the West likely to change any minds? I don't think my task is to change people's minds so much as to tell the story as best I can. Having said that, however, I do think there's a practical benefit to rethinking the Wild West myth that is so deeply engrained in our gun culture. Gun politics today stagger under the weight of our myths—and of false histories. The Gunning of America restores to the historical record the fact that the West was neither as gun-violent nor as gun-free as we tend to imagine.

-LENNY PICKER