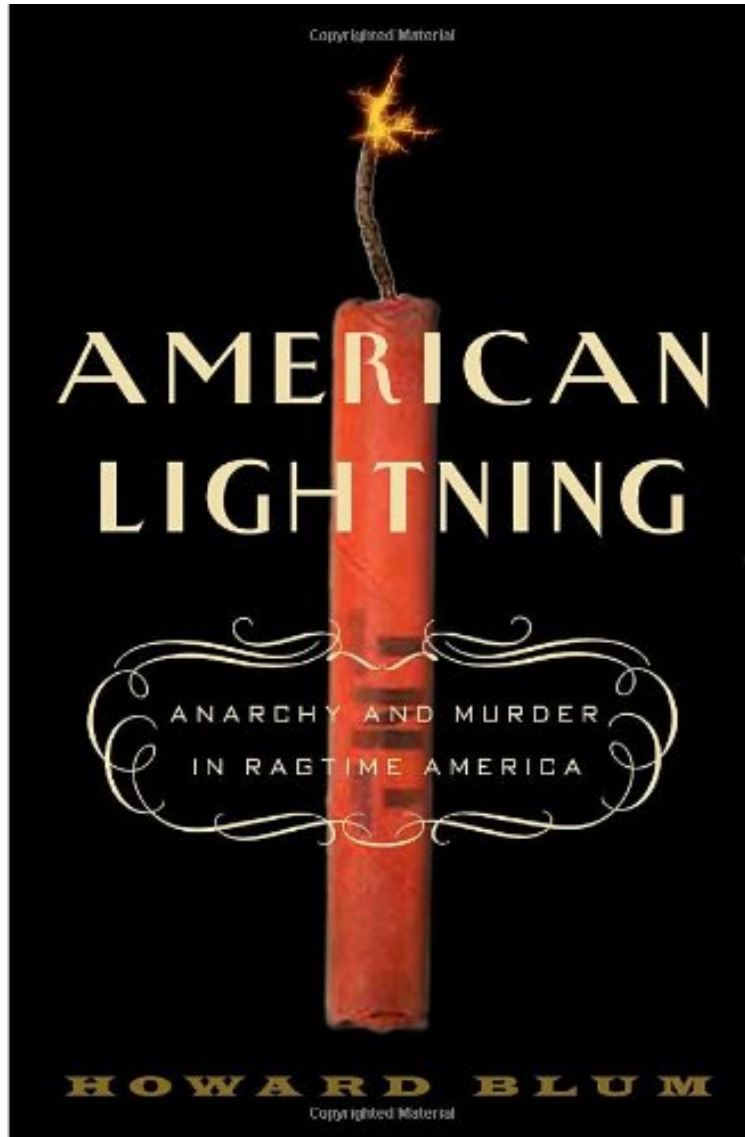


(Download free pdf) American Lightning: Terror, Mystery, and the Birth of Hollywood

American Lightning: Terror, Mystery, and the Birth of Hollywood

Howard Blum

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Howard Blum : American Lightning: Terror, Mystery, and the Birth of Hollywood before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised American Lightning: Terror, Mystery, and the Birth of Hollywood:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The start of Hollywood and labor unions against the backdrop of the blowing up of the Los Angeles Times.By Don Pricefascinating well researched book. You'll read about a part of history of film and corporate gluttony that most of us have never known (I certainly didn't).I never knew much about

DW Griffith and his influences....or of his relationship to Mary Pickford. Clarence Darrow is revealed as much more than a major trial lawyer. One never thinks of his love affairs. The intertwining of Hollywood film and labor and the blowing up of the Los Angeles Times, was all new to me. This is a very good, informative read about the not too distant past. I definitely recommend it to anyone interested in the history of Hollywood film, the manipulation of our laws and the start of the labor unions on both coasts of America. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Having been born at Hollywood Presbyterian Hospital I always enjoy the history of my home town. By Jean Martin Having been born at Hollywood Presbyterian Hospital I always enjoy the history of my home town. The characters in American Lightning are all familiar names, the street names are mostly the same, and although the locations have either new names and functions or have been completely razed their essence remains. As a child I heard my parents converse with a neighbor who was a detective in the LAPD (he was in the minority, a good cop). We lived in the San Fernando Valley and didn't feel the corruption as directly as those "over the hills". I was most interested in learning the role of the Owens River water issues and the development of the Valley, all I remember is that as a kid I loved to walk barefoot in that soft sandy soil. So, not only did I leave American Lightning with a better understanding of the politics and press, the development of my home spot, but also of the early movie industry, which my father was involved with, plus a walk down memory lane under the walnut, magnolia and lemon trees in the Valley. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. When Labor and Industry collide- the Hollywood factor doesn't really matter. By Kindle Customer Genuinely interesting book about the bombing of a LA newspaper during the upheavals between unions and industry. I learned a lot about what went on and found myself looking forward to reading it every day. I honestly could have done without the addition of Griffith's story. While the "Birth of Hollywood" angle is interesting, it didn't add anything to the true story that was being told about the bombing, the manhunt, and the ensuing trial. And just a nit pick- Continuously calling the bombing the "Crime of the Century" got on my nerves. Every time I've heard that term is was always referring to the Lindbergh baby kidnapping, so it felt like the author was trying to make the bombing bigger in our minds. It was huge in it's own right, and didn't need to borrow the name already in our consciousness. However, all in all a good read

In this masterpiece of narrative history, acclaimed author Howard Blum evokes the original "crime of the century" and an aftermath even more dramatic than the crime itself a seminal episode in Americas history that would spark national debate and draw into its orbit master sleuth William J. Burns, crusading lawyer Clarence Darrow, and industry-shaping filmmaker D. W. Griffith. "Hugely engaging . . . has tremendous verve . . . American Lightning throws valuable new light on an episode that seems, for us today, particularly pertinent. Terrorism happened here." Los Angeles Times "A fast-moving, skillfully constructed account . . . Blums style is cinematic." Chicago Sun-Times "Compelling . . . a tense detective story." Seattle Times "A thumping-good drumroll of narrative history . . . the cross-country manhunt reads like a great mystery novel . . . Blum blows the dust off a page of Americas own incendiary past and brings it to pulsating life." Dallas Morning News

From Publishers Weekly Starred . In 1911, Iron Workers Union leaders James and Joseph McNamara plea-bargained in exchange for prison sentences instead of death after bombing the offices of the Los Angeles Times killing 21 people and wounding many more. The bombing had been part of a bungled assault on some 100 American cities. After the McNamaras went to jail, Clarence Darrow, their defense attorney, wound up indicted for attempting to bribe the jury, but won acquittal after a defense staged by the brilliant Earl Rogers. The McNamaras were investigated by William J. Burns near legendary former Secret Service agent and proprietor of a detective agency. Surprisingly, Burns's collaborator in the investigation was silent film director D.W. Griffith. This tangled and fascinating tale is the stuff of novels, and Vanity Fair contributing editor Blum (The Brigade) tells it with a novelist's flair. In an approach reminiscent of Truman Capote's In Cold Blood, Blum paints his characters in all their grandeur and tragedy, making them and their era come alive. Blum's prose is tight, his speculations unfailingly sound and his research extensive all adding up to an absorbing and masterful true crime narrative. (Sept.) ""Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved." From Bookmarks Magazine Most critics were eager to learn more about this neglected event in American history and were glad to have Blum as their teacher. They were most impressed by the first half of the book, which covers the attacks and investigation and which was several times compared to a Hollywood thriller or an episode of the television show 24. ers were less thrilled by the second part of the book, where Blum introduces Darrow and Griffith into the story. Several felt that these great American personalities were presented superficially, perhaps because Blum attempted too great a scope in the book. But on the whole, critics found American Lightning to be a satisfying work of narrative history. Copyright 2008 Bookmarks Publishing LLC Extraordinary [reads] like a horseless-carriage episode of 24. Wall Street Journal An absorbing, novel-like narrative masterfully crafted Blums dedication to digging for facts and adhering to journalistic principles in reporting this entangled and multifaceted tale 100 years after the fact raises comparisons to Truman Capotes diligence in writing IN COLD BLOOD AMERICAN LIGHTNING is a must-read. USA Today Hugely engaging has tremendous verve AMERICAN LIGHTNING throws valuable new light on an episode that seems, for us today, particularly

pertinent. Terrorism happened here. Los Angeles Times A fast-moving, skillfully constructed account Blum's style is cinematic. Chicago Sun-Times Compelling a tense detective story. The Seattle Times A thumping-good drum roll of narrative history the cross-country manhunt reads like a great mystery novel Blum blows the dust off a page of America's own incendiary past and brings it to pulsating life. Dallas Morning News Blum's engaging prose makes this scandal with its O.J.-trial-like impact come alive. Details In an approach reminiscent of Truman Capote's *IN COLD BLOOD*, Blum paints his characters in all their grandeur and tragedy, making them and their era come alive. Blum's prose is tight, his speculations unfailingly sound and his research extensive all adding up to an absorbing and masterful true crime narrative. Publishers Weekly (Starred) The author's eye for scene-setting and subtle explication perfectly mimics a Griffith-style camera. Blum is at his best when exploring the motivations, the genius and the deep flaws of his three principals, men who occupied the same room only once in their lives, but who are memorably linked in this book. Unfailingly entertaining. Kirkus (Starred) Completely riveting Blum chronicles the trial and its aftermath, building suspense with an astonishing cast of characters. Booklist (Starred) Master detective William Burns on one side and famed attorney Clarence Darrow on the other A riveting account of 20th century homegrown political terrorism. Library Journal An unforgettable tale of murder, deceit, celebrity, media manipulation, and film as propaganda, when the bombing of the Los Angeles Times building exposed the deadly national dynamite plot by trade unionists to terrorize America with one-hundred bombings in a doomed attempt to force capitalism to its knees. The relentless pursuit, capture, trial, and punishment of the bombers made a national hero of America's Sherlock Holmes, master detective Billy Burns, and entangled crusading defense lawyer Clarence Darrow in a reckless, nearly career-ending scheme to bribe witnesses and jurors and throttle justice. Gripping, surprising, often thrilling, *AMERICAN LIGHTNING* ranks among the most riveting works of narrative history. James L. Swanson, author of the Edgar Award-winning New York Times bestseller *MANHUNT: THE 12-DAY CHASE FOR LINCOLN'S KILLER* This is a wonderful story, with a cast of characters out of a Cecil B. DeMille epic, told in a style that is lucid, lyrical, even electric. Narrative history at its very best. Joseph J. Ellis, Pulitzer Prize winning author of *FOUNDING BROTHERS* and *AMERICAN CREATION* In *AMERICAN LIGHTNING* Howard Blum brings to life the tragic bombing of the Los Angeles Times in 1910. Writing with narrative verve and finely-honed detective instincts, Blum fleshes out the real story behind this hideous act of domestic terrorism. Highly recommended! Douglas Brinkley, New York Times bestselling author of *THE GREAT DELUGE* and *TOUR OF DUTY* and Professor of History, Rice University "Howard Blum has given us a fascinating--and hugely entertaining--glimpse into early 20th-century America. The burgeoning labor movement, the dawn of the movies, bomb-toting anarchists, the crime of the century, gimlet-eyed private detectives, Clarence Darrow, you name it and it's here. And--eat your hearts out, novelists--it's all true." John Steele Gordon, author of *EMPIRE OF WEALTH: THE EPIC HISTORY OF AMERICAN ECONOMIC POWER* As good a true-crime tale as you could hope to find, well-researched, vivid, irresistible. Andrew Solomon, author of the National Book Award-winning *THE NOONDAY DEMON* Howard Blum has performed a literary miracle. He has brought back to vivid and relevant life a forgotten act of terrorism in America's past and made it as suspenseful and crowded with unforgettable characters as any novel I have ever read. Thomas Fleming, New York Times bestselling author of *THE OFFICERS WIVES*, *TIME AND TIDE* and *THE PERILS OF PEACE* *AMERICAN LIGHTNING* strikes at the soul of Los Angeles the way *RAGTIME* revealed turn-of-the-century New York. Like E. L. Doctorow, Howard Blum has captured a time and a place through masterful manipulation of true events, weaving an intricate tale of class war and intrigue that harks back to an era when L.A. was little more than a pueblo, frontier justice still prevailed and a fabulous cast of real-life characters dragged the future metropolis kicking and screaming into the 20th Century. Dennis McDougal, New York Times bestselling author of *THE LAST MOGUL: LEW WASSERMAN, MCA, AND THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF HOLLYWOOD* and *PRIVILEGED SON: OTIS CHANDLER AND THE RISE AND FALL OF THE LA TIMES DYNASTY* From the Hardcover edition.