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Executioner's Current: Thomas Edison, George Westinghouse, and the Invention of Theelectric Chair

By Richard Moran

Random House USA Inc, United States, 2004. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Reprint. 203 x 132 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. In this amazing story of high stakes competition between two titans, Richard Moran shows how the electric chair developed not out of the desire to be more humane but through an effort by one nineteenth-century electric company to discredit the other. In 1882, Thomas Edison ushered in the "age of electricity" when he illuminated Manhattans Pearl Street with his direct current (DC) system. Six years later, George Westinghouse lit up Buffalo with his less expensive alternating current (AC). The two men quickly became locked in a fierce rivalry, made all the more complicated by a novel new application for their product: the electric chair. When Edison set out to persuade the state of New York to use Westinghouses current to execute condemned criminals, Westinghouse fought back in court, attempting to stop the first electrocution and keep AC from becoming the "executioners current." In this meticulously researched account of the ensuing legal battle and the horribly botched first execution, Moran raises disturbing questions not only about electrocution, but about about our societys tendency to rely on new technologies to...



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