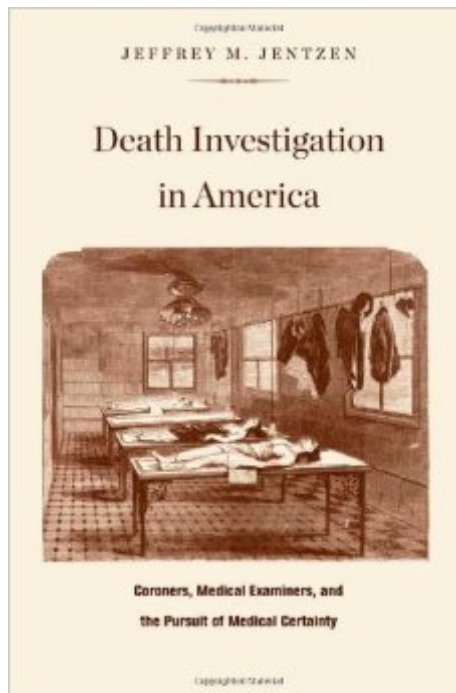


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Death Investigation In America: Coroners, Medical Examiners, And The Pursuit Of Medical Certainty



Synopsis

A death occurs at home, in a hospital, on a street: why? As Jeffrey Jentzen reveals, we often never know. Why is the American system of death investigation so inconsistent and inadequate? What can the events of the assassination of President Kennedy, killing of Bobby Kennedy, and Chappaquiddick reveal about the state of death investigation? If communities in early America had a coroner at all, he was politically appointed and poorly trained. As medicine became more sophisticated and the medical profession more confident, physicians struggled to establish a professionalized, physician-led system of death investigation. The conflict between them and the coroners, as well as politicians and law enforcement agencies, led to the patchwork of local laws and practices that persist to this day. In this unique political and cultural history, Jentzen draws on archives, interviews, and his own career as a medical examiner to look at the way that a long-standing professional and political rivalry controls public medical knowledge and public health.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Forensic medicine is a fascinating field, but one that is often shielded from the public. Most people know nothing about it other than what they see on television. This book gives the reader a real insider's perspective on this very unique and sometimes mysterious profession. As a lawyer, I often work with medical examiners on legal issues. However, I knew very little of the development of their field or their craft. I found this book very informative and surprisingly entertaining. Dr. Jentzen went one step further - he made me realize what an extremely humane profession forensic medicine

really is.

I got this book because I was doing a comparison of the US and Scottish death investigation systems. It's a great resource with a lot of history in it but it was a bit dry and I had a hard time focusing while trying to read it.

This is a must read book for Pathology residents going into or thinking about entering the field of Forensic Pathology. I found it hard to stop in the middle, and read from cover to cover within two days. Let alone Forensic Pathology itself, the county level politics a Medical Examiner had to deal with is shockingly intricate. Are you ready for it, my dear Pathology resident?

There is no other book that directly deals with the history of medicolegal death investigation, including both coroners and medical examiners, in the United States. Dr. Jentzen is to be commended for his insightful and comprehensive study. It is exceptionally meaningful to those of us in the field. For those outside, it may be somewhat dry and arcane. It does document the struggle our society has in overcoming basic tradition to bring to bear appropriate scientific and medical professional expertise to death investigation.

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