



Mortal Evidence: The Forensics Behind Nine Shocking Cases

Cyril H. Wecht, Mark Curriden, Greg Saitz

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A lifeless newborn baby is found discarded in a motel Dumpster. Authorities quickly arrest the infant's teenage parents, charging them with murder. Did Amy Grossberg and Brian Peterson, in fact, murder their own baby? Tammy Wynette died suddenly at a relatively young age, and yet no autopsy was performed? Was someone trying to hide the real cause of death? Did Sam Sheppard (later dubbed "The Fugitive" based on a television series) really kill his wife? And if not, who committed the murder?

Things are not always as they appear, as world-renowned forensic pathologist Dr. Cyril Wecht shows in this riveting behind-the-scenes look at nine famous cases. In the nationally known baby case involving Amy Grossberg and Brian Peterson, Dr. Wecht reviews the evidence and comes to a startling conclusion. In fascinating detail, he demonstrates how the tools of forensic pathology often uncover murky, long-hidden secrets that crack seemingly unsolvable crimes. Writing in the first-person Dr. Wecht leads you into the heart of the investigation, focusing each chapter on a single engrossing drama. He reveals the most startling evidence that shows why JonBenet Ramsey's killer most likely came from within her home, why O.J. Simpson probably had an accomplice in the murder of Nicole Simpson and Ron Goldman, shocking revelations about Robert Berdella's grisly torture and sex-abuse crimes against young men, and many intriguing facts about other infamous cases.

If you find the fictional plots of such dramas as C.S.I. exciting, you will be amazed by the true stories told by Dr. Wecht, with the help of two top-flight veteran reporters, Greg Saitz and Mark Curriden, in this amazing real-life thriller. As this intriguing page-turner proves, the science of forensic pathology has changed the face of detective work forever.

Mortal Evidence: The Forensics Behind Nine Shocking Cases Details

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Susan says

Good pacing and clearly written. This book is a good way to get introduced to the basic procedures, technologies, and weaknesses in forensic science and some basic medical terms. The author did a good job of covering each case in just enough details (as gruesome as you might've imagined) to engage, without lingering overly long on technical details and pedagogical points which is a common weakness I've found in this kind of books. Some cases in the book seems especially relevant right now, given the events at Ferguson. The author's comment about history repeating itself seems very prophetic in this case. Considering how much I dislike first person narratives, especially when I'm not particularly invested in the narrator, the fact that I read this entire book from start to finish should be considered a compliment to the book.

Cynthia Raleigh says

I enjoyed learning about the forensic aspects of some famous cases, as well as information from trials or depositions that I had not previously heard. While it was very interesting information, I think I would have enjoyed reading about cases where Dr. Wecht was the physician performing the autopsy or examinations rather than reporting on what had been done by other physicians. His involvement in the cases was limited to reviewing the documentation of the medical forensics and autopsies and then providing his professional opinion, usually for court testimony but sometimes for media interviews. Mortal Evidence shows Dr. Wecht to be fair-minded; someone who made very careful, well-informed decisions before presenting his opinion. Definitely a read worth the time for information on some high profile cases, such as JonBenet Ramsey and O.J. Simpson.

innae says

An enjoyable look at nine cases some famous, some that should have been but for whatever reason fell through the cracks. Dr. Wecht has some interesting insight into the O.J. case as well as the Jon Benet-Ramsey case. I think the synopses of the various cases was well done, and was entertaining.

Claire says

Enjoyable if you like forensics (which I do). Why you'd pick it up otherwise is beyond me! I was especially fascinated with his view into the JonBenet Ramsay murder, which at this point is probably beyond solving. If you have a fascination with this area, this is a good read.

Lena Jo says

I'm a huge fan of mystery. Writing my own books makes reading for information sometimes not so fun. This book was a pleasure to read! It walks you through the forensics behind nine highly publicized cases. Anyone who remembers any of these cases from the news will like reading this book.

Naeem says

very useful book

Tracy says

Very well written. Explains terminology in layman's terms that make it easier to understand. Several of these cases I've read about in numerous places, but this was interesting because you were hearing from someone that actually read the autopsy reports and was able to give a detailed explanation of what was going on. The second to last story was very hard to read and I felt that the criminal got off much too easy. But overall I learned a lot about cases I thought I knew a lot about! I would recommend this book but not to newcomers of true crime stories.

Mord McGhee says

Cyril's MORTAL EVIDENCE is a VERY hard read. His use of enormous words and long, flowing thought stream is exactly the way he is in person. I love listening to Dr. Wecht and this book was him through and through. If you enjoy autopsy accounts and evidence examinations then you'll find this an excellent read. If you are a passing reader that gives up in the face of detail... it may not be for you.

Great book full of "who knew" moments... particularly the Brian Jones and Michael Jackson sections.

~Mord

Janet Jay says

Interesting forensics but I wish the co-author had done more: this reads like an ME's testimony a lot of the time.

Amber says

I've been a fan of Cyril H. Wecht since the 90's when he would sometimes be on that HBO Autopsy show with Dr. Michael Baden. Both of them are stellar at what they do but I feel like Wecht writes better books and Baden has better shows.

Anyway, the climax for me was when Wecht explained that Dr. Michael Baden was one of his closest friends with his utmost respect but he disagreed strongly with what Baden's opinion was for a certain case. That moment awakened a desire in me to read a book (or watch a show) where those two forensic

pathologists dig up all the scientific disagreements they've ever had in their careers and present both sides of the coin for these cases. That would be so interesting! I would love to hear two science guys bicker like that! In homicide cases, nothing is ever found out for sure 100% and there's no doubt those two are masters in their field. I'm sure it's probably a 50/50 split on who's right and who's wrong in those scenarios of disagreement. And we may not ever find out for sure who is right, but it would be compelling to see them duke it out in a friendly, professional manner and explain (and educate to the viewer) why exactly their stance is what it is.

I read a lot of true crime and this book contained info I had never heard about before and I'm happy I read it from a scientist I'm familiar with and respect infinitely. Highly recommended to anyone that appreciates true crime and wants the scientific facts of the case, not unsubstantiated and biased opinions.

J.M. says

Interesting to see a forensic medical expert's opinion regarding the evidence behind nine "shocking" cases. Includes chapters on Tammy Wynette, JonBenet Ramsey, O.J. Simpson, and some Las Vegas bigshot I actually saw an episode of "Snapped" about a while back.

The book contains graphic descriptions of the forensic evidence, which may not sit well with some readers who may not want to hear all the grisly details of the autopsy and its findings, but I found it fascinating. Very good read.

MauraJParker says

As a future funeral director/ embalmer I found this book very interesting and a good read. The stories were incredible and I really liked it. This was my first time reading a book that was journal-like and real. I'm no stranger to murder mysteries but I liked how real it was and the personal aspect of it as well.

Judy Croome says

A well-documented book on nine high profile and controversial true crimes in the USA. Written in gruesome detail, the style is at times pedantic, but one would imagine this is an essential quality for a forensic scientist who would need to be meticulous down to the last hair.

There's also personal anecdotes (e.g. the information that the author doesn't gamble) and prejudices (e.g. the author's overt judgement on beauty pageants for little girls) which, at times, detracted from the overall professionalism of his fact-reporting.

Clearly a strong personality, who enjoys the limelight, Dr Wecht's comprehensive reporting of these cases provides interesting research background and information.

Angus McKeogh says

Maybe better than just okay but not necessarily amazing. It was interesting; the most eye opening cases tended to be at the beginning of the book and were much more traditionally written. Then as the book wore on some of the later chapters were just long expositions of events and seemed to have very little involvement from the author. So of the nine cases, the breakdown was fairly equal. I found three really quite good, three were mediocre, and three were not all that engaging; therefore, I've given this read a star-rating right in the middle (3).

Alyssa says

Cyril Wecht gives a lot of insight and opposing views to some famous cases. I really liked how he gave his professional opinion even if it wasn't popular opinion and he always backed it with hard forensics.
