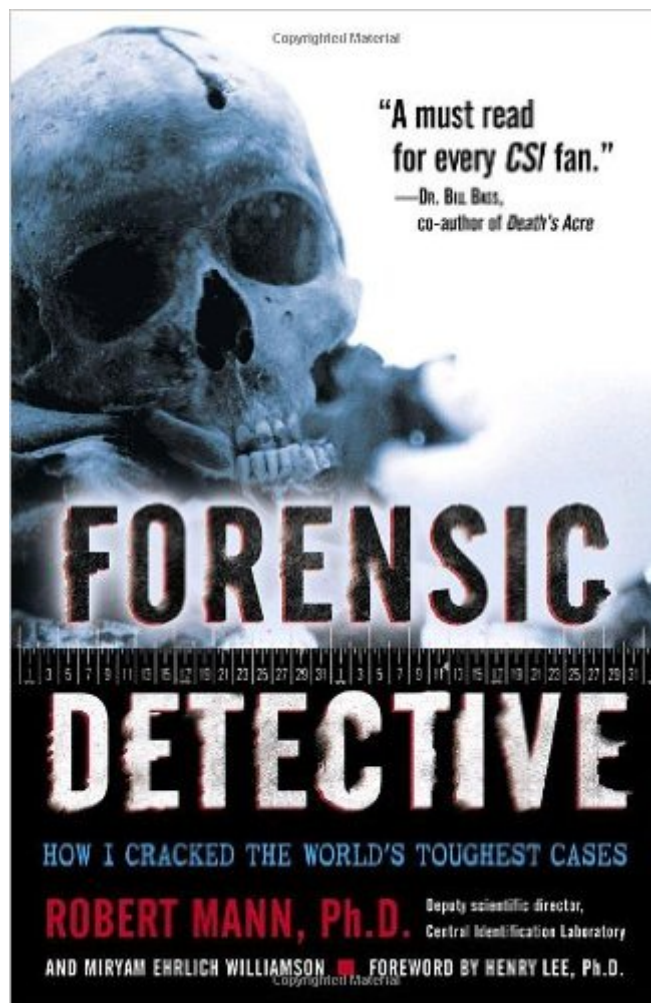


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Forensic Detective: How I Cracked The World's Toughest Cases



Synopsis

Death. It's not only inevitable and frightening, it's intriguing and fascinating—especially today, when science continues to make ever more stunning advances in the investigation of the oldest and darkest of mysteries. To discover the how and why of death, unearth its roots, and expose the mechanics of its grim handiwork is, at least in some sense, to master it. And in the process, if a criminal can be caught or closure found, so much the better. Enter Robert Mann, forensic anthropologist, deputy scientific director of the U.S. government's Central Identification Laboratory, and, some might say, the Sherlock Holmes of death detectives. When the dead reveal some of their most sensational, macabre, and poignant tales, more often than not it's Mann who's been listening. Now, in this remarkable casebook, he offers an in-depth behind-the-scenes portrait of his sometimes gruesome, frequently dangerous, and always compelling profession. In cases around the world, Mann has been called upon to unmask killers with nothing but the bones of their victims to guide him, draw out clues that restore identities to the nameless dead, recover remains thought to be hopelessly lost, and piece together the events that can unlock the truth behind the most baffling deaths. The infamous 9/11 terror attacks, which killed thousands; the unplanned killing that inaugurated serial murderer Jeffrey Dahmer's grisly spree; mysterious military fatalities from World War II to the Cold War to Vietnam, including the amazing case of the Vietnam War's Unknown Soldier—all the fascinating stories are here, along with photos from the author's personal files. Mystery hangings, mass graves, errant body parts, actual skeletons in closets, and a host of homicides steeped in bizarre clues and buried secrets—they're all in a day's work for one dedicated detective whose job begins when a life ends. From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

This isn't your huckleberry if you want to learn anything-much about death investigations. The author is skimpy about what it is he actually does or how he identifies people from their remains. This is a common problem in many books; the authors can't or won't reveal what it is they do. I suspect a lawyer was looking over his shoulder and breathing down his neck as he wrote the book. It has lawyer fingerprints and drool all over it. It gets two stars because it's an interesting yarn. Too interesting. I'd leave out all the personal stuff about his hobo days and wanton youth. But he needed to fill the pages with something, because he says so little about what he actually does. So there are plenty of interesting digressions. It's not a keeper, and in a year no one will remember it.

It was very interesting to discover how important it is for Americans to make sure that all Americans who died outside their Country to bring them back to their loved ones. Also, very interesting to find out how ahead of us are forensic techniques in the United States.

Because I not only am a practicing forensic pathologist, I also teach the subject. I am always looking for books on the subject. Forensic anthropology is not my area of expertise, and I've read the memoirs of many forensic anthropologists. The TV series "Bones" has stimulated a lot of interest in the field. Forensic Detective, How I Cracked the World's Toughest Cases will go a long way to killing interest in the field. I had to stop reading it, because I was in too much pain, the book kept hitting me in the face as I fell asleep reading it. The chapter about how Dr. Mann got into the field was mildly interesting, and the bits about the politics of choosing the unknown soldier was also interesting. For the rest, I just couldn't finish the book. The material has been gone over before, and better, by other authors. Dr. Mann would have been helped by a better ghostwriter. Bottom line, save your money.

Mann's Forensic Detective gives us the best view--to date--of the scope and complexity of forensic anthropology. Well written. Nice Job.

With the advent of CSI and similar TV programs, many of us have been drawn to the work of the 'crime labs..' even if Hollywoodized for common consumption. If nothing else, folks have come to see that there is much more to an investigation than what takes place in a sixty minute TV feature.

Mann, in this work, takes us behind the scenes to more fully appreciate the work of 'bone doctors,' and other specialists as they seek to solve interesting cases.. some long after the fact of death. While other critics may not have appreciated Mann's early background, I found it fascinating to the extent which shows that persons, even later in life, can truly amount to something important.. even after they've tossed much of their life away on nonsense. This, hopefully, could encourage others to get back on track and do something important with their time on the planet. It is fair to say that this work won't go down as a long time classic but it should be read by anyone wishing to be more familiar with a work we so seldom appreciate.

There are many fascinating books for the general public on forensic anthropology. What makes this one different from those that I have read so far is that, in addition to descriptions of efforts towards resolving murder cases, it contains several stories about the identification of the remains of soldiers who have died in various military conflicts, e.g., both World Wars, Korea, etc. The author has also included some honest and open-hearted autobiographical information. The writing style is friendly and engaging. The book should be of interest to forensics buffs, but especially those with a penchant for forensic anthropology. I enjoyed this book and, as such, I have rated it as above average for this subject category, i.e., four stars; but I don't think that it quite has the gripping edge that would make it five star material, as some such books that I have read do.

As a huge fan on CSI and Bones, I expected a lot from this book. The book is rather interesting but I find it places too much emphasis on the background story of the victims/deceased. It says a lot more background details about soldiers who died in wars. I'd prefer if the author gives us more details of the forensic processes instead. Could it be the author thought it might be too boring for the readers? I wouldn't know. But I couldn't help feeling a bit of disappointment when I finished reading the book. Nevertheless, I have absolute respect to the author, who only continued his study after several years of decadance and then went on to become one of the top forensic anthropologists in the country.

Very quick interesting read. If you enjoy forensics this is a very interesting book about a really neat Forensic Anthropologist.

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