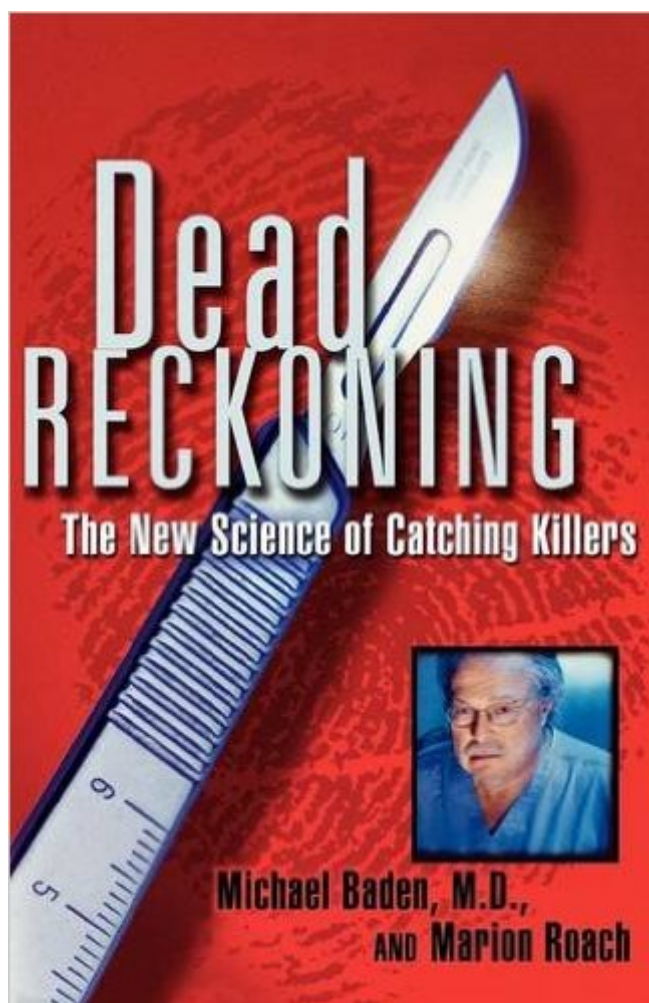


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Dead Reckoning: The New Science Of Catching Killers



Synopsis

For most people, the forensic sciences are something reported on the news when a crime is solved through Dna evidence, or used as a plot twist for television shows. But behind the crime-scene tape and the doors of the morgue is a world never seen by the public. Now famed pathologist and medical examiner Dr. Michael Baden and award-winning writer Marion Roach take readers into the laboratory, above the autopsy table, onto the witness stand and out in the field to show how advances in forensic science can solve crucial questions in a criminal case, often with startling accuracy. Baden and Roach reveal how a key clue to the killer of Nicole Brown Simpson was lost when her body was moved to the morgue, and why the JonBenet Ramsey case can never be solved. They show how no clue is too small to be analyzed and no case too old to be reopened. Full of behind-the-scenes drama and surprising revelations, *Dead Reckoning* is a fascinating look at how forensic science is changing the way we convict the guilty and free the innocent.

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Customer Reviews

This is what you get when you mix a brilliant and principled scientist with a passionately curious and witty writer. Dr. Baden and Ms. Roach educate and entertain the reader, yet never let you forget that these are the stories of real people, victims and their families who deserve justice. How science can serve up justice in many new and old cases and why it has failed, or been prevented from doing so in others, makes for some very good story-telling. I was fascinated to learn about "Blood School" in Corning, New York and the eccentric, fun-loving forensic entomologist who teaches the relationship

between corpses and bugs on his farm in Indiana. There is new information on the Nicole Brown/Ronald Goldman and the Jon Benet Ramsey murder cases, as well as details about Princess Diana's death, but the writing is never exploitive or sensational, just an honest review of mistakes made and lessons learned. Anyone whose work brings them this close to deep and devastating tragedy on a daily basis could be forgiven if they exhibited a "scientific detachment" or even a degree of dark humor about the work. I was however impressed throughout with what I would describe as Dr. Baden's "scientific attachment" and non-waivering respect in handling and describing the remains of victims. There is welcome dark comic relief mixed into Ms. Roach's descriptions of the aforementioned Blood School, Bug School and the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences in Reno, Nevada which will let you in on a secret passion of Wayne Newton's that I promise will surprise and amuse. I thoroughly enjoyed this book, was educated by it and comforted by the dedication to justice of the authors and their colleagues in this fascinating profession.

I'll admit it. On Tuesday nights, I am glued to Discovery to watch the forensic scientists at work. I am not in law enforcement and am not a scientist, I just love how they do the job of catching criminals. Dr. Baden's book is one of those that you have to keep reading once you get started. It is full of science, but doesn't overwhelm you. It is full of interesting people like Dr. Henry Lee. It is full of criminals and how they were caught or how the innocent were set free using science. I was so impressed, that I immediately ordered four more books on the subject, including one of Dr. Badens. This is a must read!

I think I read this book over a weekend. It just kept me glued to the chair; the book was just that interesting. The book talks about what the medical examiner does to determine the cause of death and what evidence he / she can gather from the body. The book is not for the very weak at heart, but it is not overly graphic or gross. The author just details so many interesting procedures and processes that you want to learn more. If you are interested in true crime or even the fictionalized versions this is a must read book. Even general reader's will like this book, it is that fast paced and gripping.

I was expecting stories of true crime and how they were solved through forensic pathology. Baden's book describes some aspects of forensics, but doesn't tell good stories. He boasts about himself, and his wonderful colleagues who are geniuses, and, yes, he complains repeatedly that we'll never

know who killed Nicole Brown Simpson and Ron Goldman, "those poor innocent people."Baden sometimes tries to make a teaser statement at the beginning of a chapter or section, to keep you reading, but there's no payoff. Here's an example: Baden writes, "Five years ago a woman in a small town in Alaska began her day by stepping into her white cotton underpants. Now those same panties are under the magnifying glass held by Dr. Henry Lee . . . " This is a prelude to a discussion of what a hell of a scientist Dr. Lee is. I never did find out about the woman in Alaska. Baden apparently didn't find her case interesting enough to recount here. Who was she? How did she die? Why did they send her undies to Lee? What did he find? What difference did it make? Why mention the underwear at all? Isn't Baden exploiting the victim just a tad here?I didn't see much interest here in the victims or their families, or even in the crimes. It's a self-congratulatory book about what a great job Baden and his buddies are doing, partly by keeping all their emotions tidily in check. Emotions and conflict and human feeling make for more engaging prose.

Dead Reckoning is not a book for the faint of heart. Forensic examiner Michael M. Baden doesn't shy away from the facts; he tells his readers EVERYTHING about what his job consists of. The book has various chapters, all of them written with great care and professionalism. But the book is always fun to read. The best chapters are the ones on maggots, on heads and on the autopsies themselves. Baden recalls his experience while on the OJ Simpson case and during the autopsy of a corpse that could have been Princess Anastasia. He tells us about the strangest and dumbest things he has seen during his very long career, all the while sharing every single gruesome detail with his readers. This is a great nonfiction book that tells us a lot about this strange and fascinating profession. It's also a great true-crime collection of anecdotes and stories. A must for any fans of the true crime genre.

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