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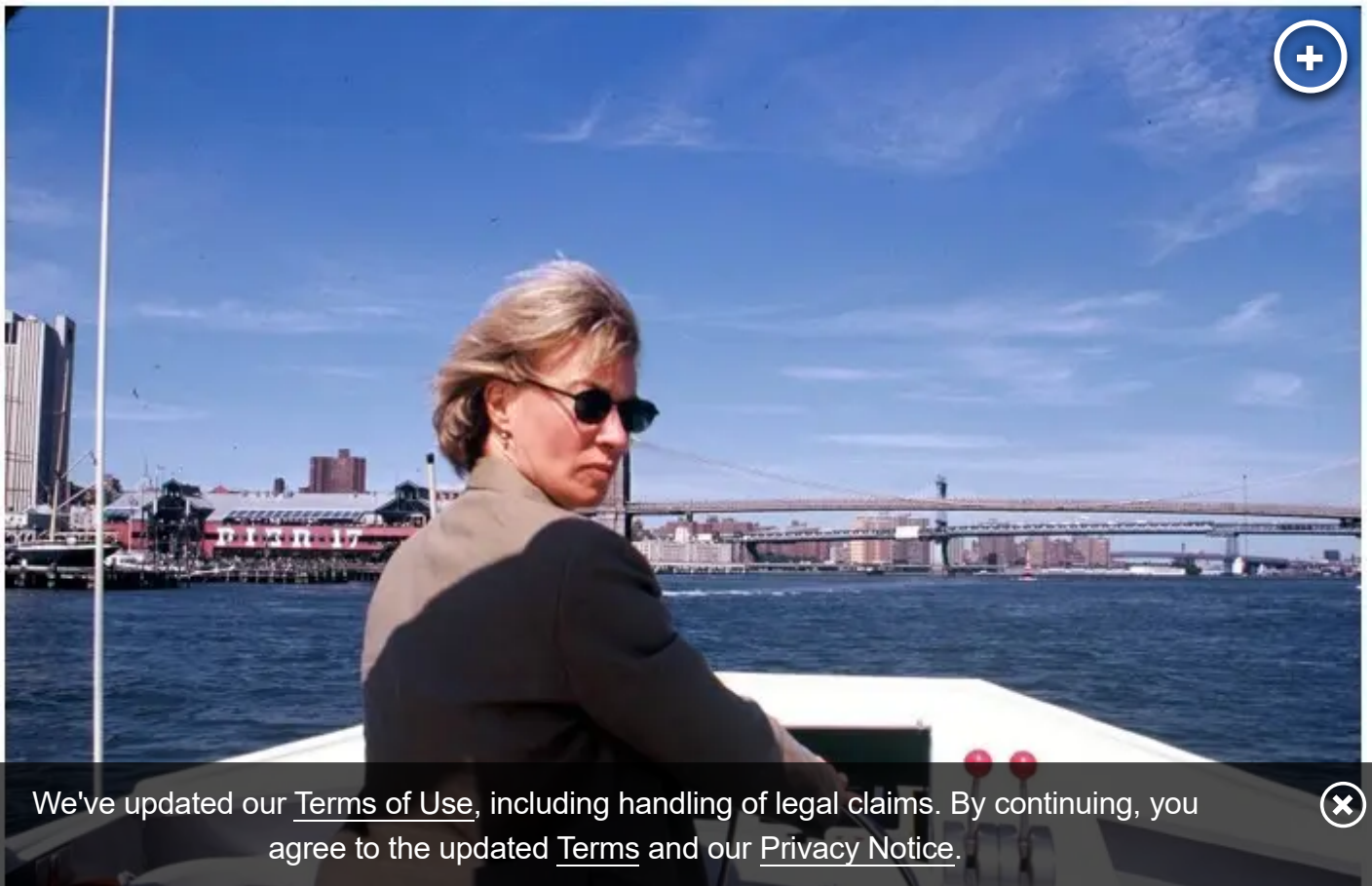


### WEIRD BUT TRUE

# NYC medical investigator's time probing death taught her more about life

By [Todd Farley](#)

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In 1992, Barbara Butcher embarked on a 22-year career as a medicolegal investigator.

Courtesy of Barbara Butcher

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Barbara Butcher came back to life by investigating death.

In the early 1990s, Butcher's alcoholism had left her in "disgrace," crashing in a tiny Greenwich Village apartment and losing good jobs as a physician's assistant and hospital administrator.

She often imagined her own suicide, going so far as to fire an empty handgun at her temple.

Eventually, she was able to control her drinking through Alcoholics Anonymous, and a connection there suggested she try vocational rehab to find a new career.

A test that was part of New York's Employment Program for Recovering Alcoholics suggested Barbara become either a vet tech or a coroner.