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What the Dead Know: Learning About Life as a New York City Death Investigator

By Barbara Butcher

Simon & Schuster: 288 pages, \$29

(June 20)

Don't let the local focus in the subtitle fool you: Butcher's lessons from her tenure in the Big Apple's [medical examiner's](#) office hold plenty of relevance for readers in any American city, and she has worked through one of the greatest mass-casualty tragedies in our history — September 11. Butcher never shrinks from explaining tough material, the better to show how essential one of the darkest jobs in the city is to our justice system.

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