



## Tales from the Morgue: Forensic Answers to Nine Famous Cases Including The Scott Peterson & Chandra Levy Cases

By Cyril H. Wecht, Mark Curriden

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Was Scott Peterson convicted of murdering Laci Peterson based upon circumstantial evidence alone? Did Washington intern Chandra Levy know her killer? In "Tales from the Morgue", Dr Cyril Wecht, one of the most sought-after forensic pathologists in the world, shares his insights and scientific expertise on nine cases that he has officially investigated - high-profile cases as well as other lesser-known but highly intriguing mysteries. Dr Wecht takes the reader inside some of the nation's most bizarre and intriguing medico-legal investigations and shows how forensic scientists help to solve crimes - and why they sometimes fail in their efforts. His vast experience and his willingness to take on the establishment if necessary and provide proof that runs counter to popular opinion make this book a page-turner.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Esteemed Pittsburgh pathologist Wecht, who's been called on to lend his expertise to the JonBenet Ramsey and O.J. Simpson cases, sorts out the evidence, or lack thereof, in the scandalous circumstances of Scott Peterson and Chandra Levy, explains why he thinks the JFK assassination was a conspiracy and agrees with the original Marilyn Monroe autopsy that found no signs of foul play. He makes an articulate argument in defense of basketball star Jayson Williams, accused of manslaughter in a 2002 shooting death on his New Jersey estate, but the most fascinating and disturbing cases are the least well known. The 1995 death of Jonny Gammage, a black man who died at the hands of police during a traffic stop, and the alleged 1989 suicide of Marine Corps captain Jeffrey Digman are prime examples. In one case, Wecht concludes that a 1985 plane crash that killed 248 American soldiers was caused by sabotage and covered up by officials. What makes Wecht's arguments so persuasive is that he lets scientific facts-or at least his expert interpretation of them-do the talking. Photos.

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From School Library Journal

Adult/High School—Young people drawn to the broad fields of criminal justice, medicine, or science will be fascinated by the forensic findings presented here. The thought-provoking cases span 40 years of renowned pathologist Wecht's career and are arranged chronologically from most recent (2002) to oldest (1962). They were also selected to uphold or refute the legal-medical decisions made by other professionals. The subjects include John F. Kennedy, Marilyn Monroe, Chandra Levy, Scott Peterson, and the airliner crash in Gander, Newfoundland. Context provided for each scenario is intertwined with detailed forensic evidence. The conclusions may or may not agree with popular judgments. In three instances, strong arguments are made that subterfuge was used to mask critical forensic evidence, and Wecht challenges authorities to reopen the cases. Readers may view *Tales* as another collection of his memoirs. Like *Grave Secrets* (Penguin, 1996) and *Mortal Evidence* (Prometheus, 2004), this chatty yet analytical book is written to appeal to laypersons, and it does. Its whodunit aspect is magnetic.—*Claudia C. Holland, Chantilly Regional Library, Fairfax County, VA*

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From [Booklist](#)

Too gruesome to be ignored, too technical for best-seller fare, this compendium is for thinking true-crime and police--procedures fans. The tabloid-and-TV-favored cases of Scott Peterson and Chandra Levy are considered at length, along with the JFK assassination and the was-it-suicide-or-murder? death of Marilyn Monroe. Then there's the odd case of rising NBA star Jayson Williams, who short-circuited fame and fortune by fatally shooting a hanger-on "while showing off his gun collection." Wecht and confreres note that "pundits" seized on Williams' excessive bar tab earlier in the evening as evidence that "a huge number of drinks" must have been consumed by Williams' party on the night that later devolved into accidental death--or murder. They point out, however, that given the call-brands consumed, which cost \$100 to \$150 a shot, a \$630 bar tab doesn't seem to indicate that many drinks, after all. Mitigating factor or damning complication? Rewarding stuff for those able to plow through its precise, subdued verbiage. *Mike Tribby*

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