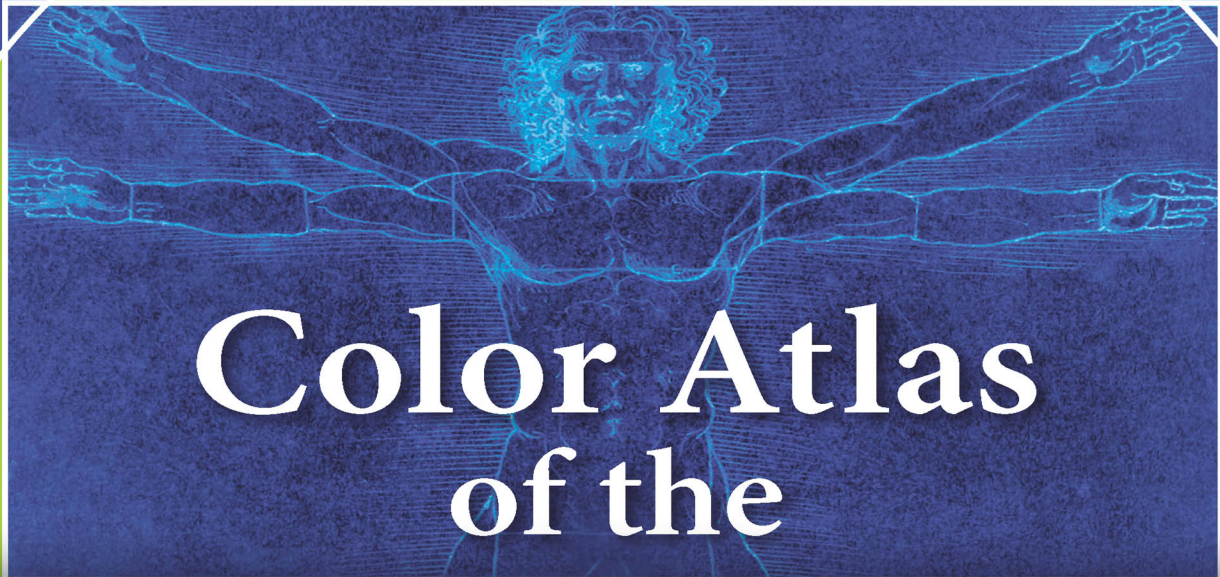


SECOND EDITION



Color Atlas  
of the

# AUTOPSY

SCOTT A. WAGNER, M.D.

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CRC Press  
Taylor & Francis Group

**Color Atlas  
of the**

**AUTOPSY**

**SECOND EDITION**



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**SCOTT A. WAGNER, M.D.**

Wagner Research, LLC

and

Northeast Indiana Forensic Center

Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA



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# PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

Finally, there is a book that takes the reader through the autopsy procedure in a stepwise fashion, just as though the reader were at the autopsy. The chapters and the information in this book are revealed in layers, just like opening the body at autopsy. The aim is not only to show *what* is done in an autopsy, but *why* and *how* it is done. Many similar books have been written for pathologists or other physicians, but not for those who must work with pathologists. Death investigators, law enforcement officials, and other professionals need to know about the strange things pathologists do, as well as how and why they do them. This book is dedicated to and written for those patient souls who must interact with pathologists before, during, and after the autopsy.

The primary purpose of this book is to introduce the processes and principles of the autopsy procedure to the new and uninitiated. Because the autopsy is primarily a visual study of the diseases and injuries of the human body, images are essential to explain the process. Images are used in the book to tell the story of how the forensic pathologist develops opinions of the cause and manner of death.

This book is written as a natural extension of 15 years of teaching and demonstrating the autopsy to medical students, paramedics, flight nurses, nursing students, death investigators, law enforcement officials, firefighters, conservation officers, and other similar professionals and students of these professions. Many such professionals are involved with the practice of medicine and are eager to see the autopsy. For some, viewing an autopsy is an educational requirement. I have found it difficult to demonstrate an autopsy for all those professionals who need to see the procedure because the demand to see an autopsy exceeds the number of autopsies being performed. Also, the time for teaching during the 1.5-hour standard autopsy is limited. For me, it was difficult to orient the visitor to what I was doing. I finally realized that the professionals and students who came to my autopsy suite left with more questions than they had when they arrived.

I began looking for videos and other teaching aids to orient those uninitiated to the autopsy. I found that little or nothing was available, especially in the video medium.

To fill this void, I produced the video *The Autopsy, Chapter One: Unraveling Life's Mysteries* in the year 2000. This video serves to teach and demonstrate visually the basic principles and practices of the autopsy. It allows the viewer to see three autopsies, with narrative explanations. Response to the video has been fantastic. Since its release, we have had numerous requests for written material to support and supplement the video medium. This book is largely a response to those requests. With narrative and over 500 still pictures, this book expands greatly on each aspect of the autopsy.

The reader should keep in mind that this is a basic book on the autopsy. The intent is not to teach one how to do an autopsy, but to show the processes and principles used in the basic forensic autopsy. Those who are interested in learning more details about anatomy, physiology, pathology, forensic pathology, and the other disciplines touched upon here should consult the suggested reading list at the back of the book. The methods demonstrated in this book are not meant to advocate only one way to perform the procedures. They simply indicate one way to do each procedure. The aim is to present a practical approach to the autopsy, with interesting findings presented along the way. One should think of this book as spending a few days at the author's autopsy table.

It is my intention that the information and images in this book be used only by professionals and students in fields related to law enforcement, death investigation, medicine, and law, or by funeral directors. Improper use of these images can be a violation of the law, and using these photographs in a salacious manner violates the basic ethics the author and his colleagues uphold. The first lesson to learn about the autopsy is reverence for the deceased and their families. It is in keeping with this reverence that I honor the deceased and use these images only to educate future and seasoned death investigators, detectives, nurses, paramedics, and other professionals. This is done to better our understanding of diseases and injuries, with the aim of benefiting the whole of humankind.

Scott A. Wagner





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# PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Now, 12 years after the first edition was published, there is even more interest and curiosity about the autopsy. However, with health records becoming more private, worries about infectious disease exposures, and the continual decline in the number of hospital autopsies, it has been increasingly difficult for most health care professionals to see an autopsy. This book serves to help fill that void by guiding the reader through the autopsy. As each page is turned, the reader looks deeper into the body.

With the success of the first edition of *Color Atlas of the Autopsy*, there came an interest in adding more pictures

and descriptions of forensic injuries. *Color Atlas of the Autopsy, Second Edition* contains more extensive photos and text on many of the main forensic subject matters, including gunshot wounds, stab wounds, chopping injuries, and a new section on natural disease and forensic pathology. The reader is advised to start from page 1 in order to be guided through the reasons, theories, terminology, findings, and conclusions of the autopsy. The autopsy is about to start; get suited up!



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# INTRODUCTION

The study of the autopsy begins with two basic assumptions: (1) the life of the individual is of the highest value; and (2) the deceased is to be treated with reverence. Our society holds the life of an individual above all else. If our culture had no reverence for life, we certainly would not care about death. Autopsies obviously do not benefit the dead; they benefit the living, and that is the focus of our study.

This book was written to fill a gap in the information about the autopsy. Books on the autopsy are normally written for physicians or experts in the fields of pathology and forensic pathology. While these books are essential for physicians and other experts in the field, no accessible books are available that show the process of the autopsy to those who interface with pathologists. It is often difficult for paramedics, crime scene investigators, firefighters, law enforcement officials, nurses, and students of these fields to observe an autopsy. Even when an autopsy can be viewed, the pathologist has limited time to explain

the theories behind, and the purposes of, the autopsy procedure. Some professionals never see or experience an autopsy until they are on the job. Pathologists benefit when they interact with professionals who understand something about the autopsy—that is, what an autopsy can and cannot do.

This book is not a comprehensive study of the autopsy procedure. Anatomy, physiology, and histology are touched upon, but they are not the focus of the book. Forensic medicine and forensic pathology principles are introduced. However, the reader is advised to consult the bibliography for encyclopedic information on diseases and injuries. We depict routine autopsy procedures done in a convenient, practical way. There are many ways to approach and perform an autopsy, and we certainly do not mean to imply that our methods are the only ones, or even the best. Our aim is to expose the reader to the principles, common findings, and practices of the adult autopsy.



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