

BOOK REVIEW

William B. Sullivan, Jr.¹

A Review of Witnesses from the Grave: The Stories Bones Tell

REFERENCE: Joyce, C. and Stover, E., *Witnesses from the Grave: The Stories Bones Tell*, Little, Brown and Co., New York, 1991, 333 pp.

Witnesses from the Grave promises to “explore the world of Forensic Anthropology through the eyes of one of its foremost practitioners, Clyde Snow.” The promise is kept for both the forensic science practitioner and the general reader.

The subtitle, *The Stories Bones Tell*, begs the reader to look upon history, both recent and past, and learn from these stories. The stories of the bones (history itself) are delivered “Texas style” through the eyes of Clyde Collins Snow. By using Snow as the conduit, the authors have exposed a fascinating science through a unique individual.

I am sure the authors had a great deal of difficulty corralling the sometimes aloof Dr. Snow to secure any facts of his life, other than his work. He is not a publicity seeker. They have painted an accurate picture of both Snow and his expertise, while telling the tales of human tragedies. They have researched their subjects well.

The story of Dr. Snow receiving the “Golden Fleece Award” is one of many humorous tales in his life. All who know Dr. Snow have several other tales, many of which shouldn’t be repeated. Reviewer’s note: ask Dr. Snow about his gorilla!

The book gives an adequate dose of the history of Forensic Anthropology, as well as a glimpse of the many forensic sciences used to solve the mysteries of death (and life).

The authors also deliver a heavier message, especially to those in the scientific community: Look beyond your own everyday existence, your community, and your laboratory. Look at the abuse of one on one, and of governments against their people. Then do something about it. Dr. Clyde Snow did.

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