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No Bone Unturned: Inside the Wrold of a Top Forensic Scientist and His Work on America's Most Notorious Crimes and Disasters by Jeff Benedict, Harper Collins, 2004

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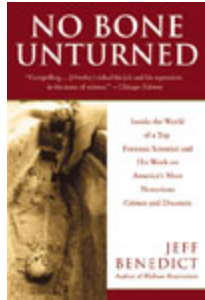
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No Bone Unturned: Inside the World of a Top Forensic Scientist and His Work on America's Most Notorious Crimes and Disasters

by Jeff Benedict, Harper Collins, 2004

Reviewed by Dick McGowan

No Bone Unturned chronicles the exploits of, perhaps, America's foremost forensic scientist, Doug Owsley. For CSI fans, there's no better book than this one.

Owsley has made a career out of understanding what death might tell us. A curator for the Smithsonian, Doug Owsley has been involved in one fascinating case after the other. Who was it buried in that old church in Maryland? Was it a member of the nobility? A commoner? And if it were a member of the nobility, what was the person's name and identity? Those are the sorts of questions Owsley's explorations answer.

With attention and care, he reconstructs skeletons, seeking knowledge of identity and cause of death. The State Department has used his skill and expertise investigating the mass graves in Croatia, working on the deaths from the terrorist attacks on the Pentagon, and, perhaps his most famous case of all, examining the Kennewick Man.

The Kennewick Man, a 9,600 year old skeleton found along the shores of the Columbia River, presented more than scientific problems to Owsley. The discovery of those bones became a cause célèbre for Native American tribes in the Northwest and a political 'hot potato' for the government. No Bone Unturned offers a solid account of how government and scientific inquiry work, sometimes harmoniously and sometimes not so cooperatively.

No Bone Unturned, thus, presents one man's stand for knowledge and against governmental bureaucracy and political correctness. The book is worth reading if only for the courage of Doug Owsley.

- Dick McGowan is an instructor in the College of Business at Butler University.