

# Beyond Knowing: Mysteries and Messages of Death and Life from a Forensic Pathologist

J. Amatuzio

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Dr. Janis Amatuzio has been a pathologist and medical examiner in Minnesota for over 25 years, performing hundreds of autopsies per year for a variety of deaths including homicide, suicide, accidents, and natural causes. As a forensic pathologist, Dr. Amatuzio examines bodies, investigates circumstances of death, and, by doing so, learns about the deceased's personal habits and beliefs. In essence, she speaks to the dead by understanding the truths that led to their demise. Dr. Amatuzio has also experienced unusual, uncanny events surrounding the deaths she is investigating, including dreams, visions, and strange synchronicities with the deceased's love ones. These nonscientific experiences, described by Dr. Amatuzio as extraordinary, form the basis of her book *Beyond Knowing: Mysteries and Messages of Death and Life from a Forensic Pathologist*.

*Beyond Knowing* is a collection of stories by Dr. Amatuzio touching on her childhood, medical-school years in Minnesota, residency in pathology, and life as a forensic pathologist. These stories focus on Dr. Amatuzio's experiences with the mystical and spiritual while she worked closely with the dead and their surviving love ones, as well as stories told to her by other people who have experienced death in their families. During early childhood, Janis Amatuzio had her first supernatural experience one afternoon in her bedroom, when a warm, comforting light appeared to swirl around her and take the form of 2 luminous horses that the author would later determine to be her spiritual guide throughout her life. Dr. Amatuzio had another extraordinary experience in the fall of 1973 after entering medical school at the University of Minnesota, where she was one of only 12 women. It happened during a class on anatomy, a class that both terrified and excited her. She and her lab partners were dissecting the arm of a cadaver when she noticed the laboratory windows mysteriously swing wide open, letting in a gentle breeze. Suddenly her viewpoint shifted and she found herself out of her body looking at a squirrel on a tree outside the cadaver lab. At that moment, a familiar stillness and peacefulness passed through her, to

last only a few seconds as her spirit quickly was brought back to the anatomy lab.

Dr. Janis Amatuzio's first introduction to forensic pathology began after her father, a physician, made her rotate through the pathology department. She decided to stick to forensic pathology when she was allowed to participate as a medical investigator in a hotel fire that caused 8 deaths. She fell in love with pathology because of its application to a diverse field of knowledge, including medicine, forensic pathology, anthropology, dentistry, and the investigative strategies of law enforcement to identify bodies and determine their cause of death.

In a particularly interesting story, Dr. Amatuzio was asked to determine the cause of death of an auto accident victim to expedite the process of organ donation. The death appeared ordinary until a young chaplain came by to explain the circumstances in which the body was found. On the evening of the accident, the recently married victim's wife experienced a profound dream in which she saw her husband standing by her bedside apologizing for being involved in an accident. The young wife abruptly woke up, called 911, and reported the not-yet-known fatal accident of her husband. Twenty minutes later, following the route her husband took, the police officers found the accident victim's body and his wrecked car within a ravine hidden away from the road.

Experiences of life after death have been part of the spiritual, nonscientific world for centuries. *Beyond Knowing* is a modern-day account of these experiences by a physician who has been involved closely with death and for whom the power of objective forensic observation enhanced by internal insight led to a deeper vision of life and the afterlife. I stumbled across the book after being persuaded to attend an All Hallows psychic fair in Manhattan. Although my Reiki spiritual psychic session was somewhat disappointing, I did find this extraordinary book that I now recommend to both medical and nonmedical readers alike.

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