



Beyond the Body Farm: A Legendary Bone Detective Explores Murders, Mysteries, and the Revolution in Forensic Science

William M. Bass , Jon Jefferson

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There is no scientist in the world like Dr. Bill Bass. A pioneer in forensic anthropology, Bass created the world's first laboratory dedicated to the study of human decomposition—three acres of land on a hillside in Tennessee where human bodies are left to the elements. His research at "the Body Farm" has revolutionized forensic science, helping police crack cold cases and pinpoint time of death. But during a forensics career that spans half a century, Bass and his work have ranged far beyond the gates of the Body Farm. In this riveting book, the bone sleuth explores the rise of modern forensic science, using fascinating cases from his career to take readers into the real world of C.S.I.

Some of Bill Bass's cases rely on the simplest of tools and techniques, such as reassembling—from battered torsos and a stack of severed limbs—eleven people hurled skyward by an explosion at an illegal fireworks factory. Other cases hinge on sophisticated techniques Bass could not have imagined when he began his career: harnessing scanning electron microscopy to detect trace elements in knife wounds; and extracting DNA from a long-buried corpse, only to find that the female murder victim may have been mistakenly identified a quarter-century before.

In *Beyond the Body Farm*, readers will follow Bass as he explores the depths of an East Tennessee lake with a twenty-first-century sonar system, in a quest for an airplane that disappeared with two people on board thirty-five years ago; see Bass exhume fifties pop star "the Big Bopper" to determine what injuries he suffered in the plane crash that killed three rock and roll legends on "the day the music died"; and join Bass as he works to decipher an ancient Persian death scene nearly three thousand years old. Witty and engaging, Bass dissects the methods used by homicide investigators every day, leading readers on an extraordinary journey into the high-tech science that it takes to crack a case.

Beyond the Body Farm: A Legendary Bone Detective Explores Murders, Mysteries, and the Revolution in Forensic Science Details

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Author : William M. Bass , Jon Jefferson

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Murders, Mysteries, and the Revolution in Forensic Science William M. Bass , Jon Jefferson**

From Reader Review Beyond the Body Farm: A Legendary Bone Detective Explores Murders, Mysteries, and the Revolution in Forensic Science for online ebook

Crystal says

A wonderful sequel to The Body Farm! Dr Bass and his coauthor Mr Jefferson have a way of explaining complicated forensic techniques in an easy to understand way, which is very appreciated by a layman such as myself. I wish that I'd known about the skeletal diagrams that are in the back of the book sooner. The three part story about Ms Leoma Patterson had me enthralled. Is she Leoma? Or someone else? Read it to find out! The Big Bopper tale isn't so much about the mystery of the plane crash which took his life, but more about how the exhumation of his body was cathartic to his descendants. It's also amazing to read about the evolution of forensics from his beginning to now, with modern computing and tools.

Lindsay says

So considering I read this book in three days, that should be enough of an indication how I felt.

It's not entirely without some gore and maggots, but overall, I found this one slightly less gory than Death's Acre to the point where "normal" people could probably read it. Dr Bass has an excellent way of writing and narrating stories that are not only compelling, but very easy to understand. There's also quite a few funny quips throughout the book (I laughed probably a few too many times during the Worm Farm chapter....). Otherwise if I was still still I was reading - it was obsessive. I needed to know how each case went.

I now know where the little Identity Crisis novella came from - three chapters worth from this book. I just skipped them since I've already read that story.

I used to be in college for exactly this topic, too. I'm still mad at my 20 year old self for not following through.

AJ P says

Audiobook.

I suppose the good thing about returning to having a long commute (which I hate by the way, there is only ONE tiny, tiny upside) is getting to listen to audio books again.

This was a fun book about the founder of University of Tennessee's "Body Farm" and some of the more interesting cases he has had. And they definitely were interesting cases. Some are fascinating on their own, and some more so for people who are interested in forensics - in this case almost entirely forensic anthropology, though there is occasional talk of other fields of forensics.

Real life Bones. And better than the Reichs books.

maria helena says

I'm a big fan of the Body Farm series, and was looking forward to reading this nonfiction collection of case studies to learn more about the career of Bass. It was definitely an interesting read, but at the end of it, I found myself wanting more. More science, more details, more cases. More gore.

3.5 stars

Travel Writing says

Back when I was finishing my BA, one of my favorite teachers was Dr. Tom Holland (One Drop of Blood), a forensic anthropologist at the Central Identification Lab in Honolulu.

I took every single course Dr. Holland offered just to hear his stories. I had no interest in being a scientist of any kind- I just wanted him to tell one more gruesome/awesome story.

This is the same reason I read all Dr. Bass' books. His writing is tame in comparison. More like a great Uncle telling you little snippets at Thanksgiving, but doing so in the most gentle and beige way as possible as to not piss off your great aunt, his wife.

It is also enjoyable to see how many ways Dr. Bass can give himself a little sideways 'kudos' or humble brag. He is epic at it. :)

Irka says

Nie wiem jak w oryginale, ale polskie tłumaczenie chwilami było męczące ("kości policzkowe!"). Pomijam literówki, te były ale na całe szczęście było ich mało więc a tak nie psuły radości z czytania. Niestety męczące były próby tłumaczenia gdzie jaki punkt znajduje się np. na czaszce, gdybym nie zajmowała się szkieletami miałabym trudności ze zrozumieniem objaśnień, z resztą lepsza porówka czytajcie mi czasami przez ramię potrafiła spytać "ale zaraz, to gdzie to w rzeczywistości jest, bo się zgubiłem". Ogólnie trochę ciekawa, jeżeli kogoś interesują seriale typu Kości czy CSI, tu może się dowiedzieć np. że DNA nie dostaje się "od ręki" i czasem trwa to miesiącami, a jak w jednej z opisanych tu spraw i latami. Nie jest to jednak książka dla każdego. Osoby szczególnie wrażliwe powinny sobie odpuścić rozdział np. o Big Bopper, nawet z odpowiednim przeszkoleniem, "bolało" jak czytałam opis doznanych urazów...a sędzią, że po studiach, ukończonych kursach walki, praktykach i szkoleniach psychologicznych jestem odporna.

Dav says

Beyond the Body Farm: A Legendary Bone Detective Explores Murders, Mysteries, and the Revolution in Forensic Science

• by William M. Bass, Jon Jefferson (pub. 2007)

Overview

"A pioneer in forensic anthropology, Dr. Bill Bass created the world's first laboratory dedicated to the study of human decomposition—three acres on a hillside in Tennessee where human bodies are left to the elements. His research has revolutionized forensic science, but during a career that has spanned half a century, Bass and his work have ranged far beyond the gates of the "Body Farm."

In this riveting book, the renowned bone sleuth explores the rise of modern forensic science and takes readers deep into the real world of crime scene investigation (CSI). Beyond the Body Farm is an extraordinary journey through some of the most fascinating investigations of Dr. Bass's career—and a remarkable look at the high-tech science used to crack the most perplexing cases."

"The Dead Do Tell Tales"

Dr. Bill Bass and his collaborator Jon Jefferson use the pen name Jefferson Bass to co-author The Body Farm novel series. In those intriguing stories you'll find some of the details of the actual cases he presents in this autobiography.

Dr. Bass begins the book with his first encounter with an exhumed body. More than 50 years ago Bill was a student studying sterile bones in the classroom, when he's asked to accompany his Professor during the ID of a corpse. When the coffin opens the putrescence and smell cause Bill to hurl; an embarrassment never repeated. Dr. Bass, now aging and ailing is actually retired, but he can't turn down calls for his expertise and remains quite busy.

The importance of forensic anthropology lies in restoring identity to unknown bodies and bones. Throughout the book Dr. Bass reveals a variety of cases, skills and equipment in the forensic anthropology processes. Examples of his work: In 1964 he's called to Iran to identify three 2,800 year old skeletons found with an unusual golden bowl.

An illegal fireworks operation explodes, disarticulating or blowing apart nearly a dozen bodies. A 12th person, a kid was blown sky-high, sailing over the house to land alive in the front yard and found walking, but in shock.

A Chop Shop crook kills his whistleblower brother-in-law, but is convicted by teeth marks he left in his cigar stub.

The son of J.P. Richardson Junior has J.P.'s body exhumed and examined by Dr. Bass, to find out if he may have survived the plane crash and tried to go for help. No; careful analysis shows J.P. died on impact.

The book also covers IDs through dental records; info gained from viewing decomposing corpses at the Body Farm; the significance of flies and maggots; the CSI effect; the long process of investigation and DNA analysis; ongoing improvements in accuracy and speed with computer-aided analysis and so much more.

Dr. Bass gives the realities of forensic anthropology over the past 50 plus years. CSI is the abbreviated, edited version of crime scene investigation and the Body Farm novels add suspense and urgency to a tedious, gory job. Mostly liked it.

3 or 4 Stars.

•

Lady ♥ Belleza says

Patricia Cornwell wrote a book called The Body Farm, this book is about the REAL body farm where forensic research is done. Dr. Bass has spent many years researching bones and the effects of the elements on dead bodies. His expertise has helped convict murderers, identified loved ones and solved mysteries.

He recounts not only what goes on at the Farm but also many of the cases he has been on. He gives credit where credit is due, citing work done by other scientists and his students. His specialty is bones, he has also worked with teeth and his students have studied bugs, tool marks on bones and many things to help solve the cases that come their way.

This book did not delve deeply into his personal life, he does make brief mention, such as, "I didn't go on this case because my wife at the time was battling cancer" and "I have to give credit to my third wife because she made me do". I think his other book Death's Acre is more of a memoir than this, he refers to it and now it is on my To Be Read list.

Dr. Bass writes in a very informal manner, he explains things so the layperson can understand. It could be he learned this from his years testifying and having to make juries understand. He doesn't go beyond his knowledge or experience, he admits when he doesn't understand some aspect of forensic science. The result is an informative enjoyable book that I recommend.

Ana says

A highly fascinating read coming from the guy who created the Body Farm, that thing out of your nightmares that is actually an incredible aid to forensic science. It's written well, it's about people figuring out what happened to victims based on very limited evidence, it contains vivid and scientifically accurate descriptions of bones, cadavers and everything in between... what more can you ask for? I do like me some good ol' forensic examination.

The only complaint I have to file - and I've noticed this in countless other books - what's up with the title? I have a hard time believing that the man who wrote the book also gave himself the title of "Legendary". If he did, that's a bit of an issue. Not to question the legendary-ness of him, not at all. I'm guessing the editor chose it, because it's more dramatic this way. Again, I'm not trying to take anything away from a man who helped push forensic anthropology to its present form, but I'm just endlessly fascinated at way some titles are framed.

Erica says

I enjoyed this book. As someone who has always loved a good mystery and solving a puzzle, this book goes into the myriad of scientific and technological advances that forensics has experienced in the last few decades.

Naomi says

Like their book *Death's Acre: Inside the Legendary Forensic Lab the Body Farm Where the Dead Do Tell Tales*, *Beyond the Body Farm* chronicles the cases of Dr. Bill Bass. With the authors' high quality of writing present, I was engrossed in the how it was solved explanations that were laid out for readers.

The only thing that I wish with this book is that I would have listened to it as I did *Death Acres*. There was something powerful in listening to the words that was missing in reading about the cases

Matt says

Bass returns with his second non-fiction book, further explaining his career as a forensic anthropologist and life on the Body Farm. While the book reads well independently, any reader not well versed with Bass' work (having read all the Body Farm fiction series) ought to take the time to at least read *DEATH'S ACRE*, the memoir of sorts that Bass penned. This book offers a continuation in that light, highlighting some of the other cases and offers an even more detailed look at some of the techniques used by Bass and his colleagues to solve crimes or mysteries. Bass resumes his dry wit and adds a layer of 'teachable moments', while still keeping the reader interested in the subject matter. Delving into some long-spanning cases, some highly disturbing murders, and one 'famous' case, Bass keeps the reader hooked, while explaining the wonderful world of osteo-analysis and the nuances that make all the difference. Well worth seeing things from the other side of the coin, Bass fans will surely appreciate this work and may notice some factual similarities between these tales and the plotlines in the Body Farm novels.

While Bass does lament the CSI generation for expecting things at the drop of a hat, I was introduced to forensics through this show and, perhaps, books by Kathy Reichs. That said, when I began reading the Body Farm series, I was well-versed in understanding some of the nuances and how bones, bugs, and decomposition could assist investigations. However, it was not until I took the time to read both of Bass' non-fiction tales (quasi-memoirs, as he labels them) that I got a true feel for what goes on and the time it takes. Cram an entire case into 40 minutes on CSI or BONES and you have a condensed version of the meticulous art behind forensics (especially anthropology). Bass blew me away with some of the details he imparted in the book and his utter determination to help those who can no longer help themselves (and provide answers to families who may have lost hope). The stories flow freely, even if there are textbook-like moments to help the reader better understand what is going on. Well worth the time and effort and a wonderful precursor to reading the Body Farm series for any interested reader.

Kudos, Messrs. Jefferson and Bass for yet another great book, full of insight and gruesome detail. I will be sure to share my praise with others, if only to help educate them on this important wing of crime detection.

Alicia says

A unique look at a man and his mysterious work (not that he's mysterious but the work is used to solve mysteries) of the body. How can we know whether this skeleton is five days old or 400 years old? How can we figure out from a soapy, waxy material behind our eyeball about what kind of situation they were in? It's all the kind of fascinating mystery stuff that's the real life version of any crime scene investigative fictional series on television. It's the living people who do this work, build the databases, and are curious enough to

create entire farms of decomposition in order to process bodies and build repositories for knowledge and information.

Bass provides faces/names/places to stories about real life situations that they've learned something from.

Fishface says

A great read, collecting more of Bill Bass's most interesting stories for our delectation. Every case has something interesting in it, like the crazy rumors circulating about "the day the music died" and how he was able to dispel them all in an afternoon with a portable x-ray machine.

Keilani Ludlow says

The second non-fiction from Dr Bill Bass and Jon Jefferson.

This could be considered a follow up to Death's Acre, and it is definitely helpful, though not necessary, to have read Death's Acre first.

In the first book, Dr. Bass was following a time line, telling his own story. And though it was fact, it read like a story. In this book, he is no longer following a time line, he is just telling about different cases he has worked on. Some were solved, some were not. It is interesting and enjoyable to read about the techniques used and the things that were learned, and the things that prompted them to new research.

One thing that was also enjoyable shows up because of his many years in the field. He tells about a case he couldn't solve (entirely – it was partially solved) and then 20+ years later, when new technology is available, he remembers past cases and goes back to them with new technology to try and solve what they couldn't solve in the past. That is pretty cool.

This is more of a collection of small stories, and I've never been a small story kind of gal. You just get interested and it's over. Not enough time for plot and character development. However, having read the first book, while this read like a selection of short stories, it also continued the story line from the first book so there was a more enjoyable feeling of continuity.
