32cDu [GET] The Cadaver King and the Country Dentist: A True Story of Injustice in the American South



This is a tale of two tragedies. At the heart of the first is Dr. Steven Hayne, a doctor the State of Mississippi employed as its de facto medical examiner for two decades. Beginning in the late 1980s, he performed anywhere from 1,200 to 1,800 autopsies per year, five times more than is recommended, performed at night in the basement of a local funeral home. Autopsy reports claimed organs had been observed and weighed when, in reality, they had been surgically removed from the body years before. But Hayne was the only game in town. He also often brought in local dentist and self-styled "bite mark specialist" Dr. Michael West, who would discover marks on victim's bodies, at times invisible to the naked eye, and then match those marks - "indeed and without doubt" - to law enforcement's lead suspect. This leads to the second tragic tale: that of Kennedy Brewer and Levon Brooks, two black men each convicted in separate cases of the brutal rape and murder of young girls. Dr. Hayne's autopsy and Dr. West's bite-mark matching formed the bases for the convictions. Combined, the two men served over 30 years in Mississippi's notorious penitentiary - Parchman Farm - before being exonerated in 2008. Brooks' and Brewer's wrongful convictions lie at the intersection of both the most pressing problem facing this country's criminal justice system - structural injustice built on the historic foundation of race and class as well as with the much more contemporary but equally egregious problem of invalid forensic science. The old problem is inextricably bound up with and exacerbates the new.In The Cadaver King and the Country Dentist, Radley Balko and Tucker Carrington write a true story of Southern Gothic horror - of two innocent men wrongly convicted of vicious crimes and the legally condoned failures that allowed it to happen. Balko and Carrington will shine a light on the institutional and professional failures that allowed this tragic, astonishing story to happen, identify where it may have happened elsewhere, and show how t

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