

27 AUTOPSIES IN 9 DAYS

It was the Fourth Of July. The doctor and I took a quick break from our work to step outside and catch a few of the fireworks that were going off in a celebration downtown. We were in the middle of a 9 day period where the office would be performing 27 autopsies. To put this in perspective, we average over the course of a year about one autopsy every day. Or on a more personal level, let me tell you that I work the 4 - midnight shift. On a normal five - day week, I might have to assist with an autopsy once, maybe twice during the week. During this period, I was doing autopsies every night!

There's a lot to be said about this. On the one hand, I'm quick to point out that there are many who think that doctors make a lot of money, drive fancy cars, and golf on Wednesday. The doctors here average at least 60 hours per week, and during this period of wholesale death, these doctors were practically living here. There were many nights when the doctors were still hard at work when I left the office at midnight.

As to the deaths, it seemed like drowning was the big item followed by drug - related acts of violence. Throw in a hand full of motor vehicle accidents and various other types of death and you have one very busy office.

For the record, I will say that I took this job so that I could further my writing career. For me, a good night is when I come to work and the place is clean and quite. I can spend the evening behind the typewriter writing my stories and answering the phones. Assisting in autopsies is not something I get too excited about. But when things get real busy like this, there's a sense of accomplishment in being a part of it all. It was a wild time and I will say that I certainly worked my tush off. I look back at that time now and I can't believe the amount of work that we got done. We did it all without too many mistakes which is quite a lot to be proud of.

But for me, the writer who would rather spend his evening sitting behind a typewriter, I can honestly say that I'm very happy to have that period of fireworks behind me.