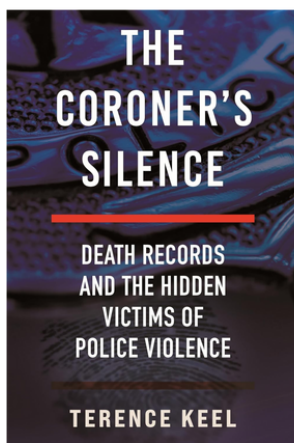


THE CORONER'S SILENCE:

DEATH RECORDS AND THE HIDDEN VICTIMS OF POLICE VIOLENCE



For readers of *His Name Is George Floyd* and *Under the Skin*

A landmark investigation into forensic medicine that exposes the systematic concealment of state-sanctioned violence through death investigations

Each year, police officers kill over 1,000 people they've sworn to protect and serve. While some cases, like George Floyd's and Sandra Bland's, capture national attention, most victims remain nameless, their stories untold. *The Coroner's Silence* reveals a disturbing truth about these cases: coroners and other death investigators are often complicit in obscuring the violent circumstances of in-custody deaths.

Through rigorous research—including critical records analysis, public health studies, and interviews with victims' families—this book unmasks the systemic failures within forensic medicine. Terence Keel shows how incomplete autopsy reports, mishandled medical documents, and strategically lost evidence effectively shield law enforcement from accountability.

The Coroner's Silence uncovers how the current system of death investigation operates as a mechanism of institutional safeguarding. By highlighting the structural powerlessness of coroners and their disconnection from the communities most affected by police violence, Keel demonstrates how bureaucratic processes can render human suffering invisible.

True accountability requires more than procedural reform. It demands a fundamental reimagining of how we investigate, document, and understand deaths at the hands of state institutions. *The Coroner's Silence* is a crucial intervention that challenges us to confront the deeply ingrained mechanisms that perpetuate systemic violence.

"Terence Keel meticulously exposes a bureaucratic machinery in which science and medicine are weaponized to disguise in-custody deaths as natural or unavoidable."

—Ruha Benjamin, author of *Viral Justice: How We Grow the World We Want*

"This courageous and essential book demands that we confront not only police violence but also the underlying inhumanity of a society that criminalizes and abandons those marginalized by profound inequality—and allows the state to kill them with impunity."

—Dorothy Roberts, author of *Killing the Black Body and Torn Apart*

"A stunning achievement. Reading this book changes how one sees this country and the people who bear the brunt of its contradictions. A must-read in these troubling times."

—Eddie S. Glaude Jr., author of *Begin Again*

"Terence Keel deftly navigates a complicated maze of history, procedure, bureaucracy, reports, testimony, misdirection, and obfuscation to get at the real truth: the coroner, constrained by structural racism, politics, and moral panics, is part of the problem. *The Coroner's Silence* is a big part of the solution."

—Robin D. G. Kelley, author of *Freedom Dreams*

"Keel's unflinching autopsy of the embodied realities of US deaths due to police and carceral violence exposes how long-standing systemic legal, medical, and carceral 'failures,' in fact, successfully operate to entrench injustice. The antidotes? Transparency and transformative justice."

—Nancy Krieger, professor of social epidemiology, Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health



Terence Keel is a professor of human biology, society and African American studies at UCLA. His latest book is *The Coroner's Silence: Death Records and the Hidden Victims of Police Violence*

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