



## Luncheon Seminar - 2016

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### L1 Working Stiff: Forensic Training & Public Relations in a Digital Age

*Judy Melinek, MD\**, PathologyExpert Inc, 3739 Balboa Street, #102, San Francisco, CA 94121; *T.J. Mitchell, BA\**, PathologyExpert Inc., 3739 Balboa Street, #102, San Francisco, CA 94121; and *Lindsey C. Thomas, MD*, Hennepin County ME, 530 Chicago Avenue, S, Minneapolis, MN 55415

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand: (1) how to write clearly and effectively about forensic science; and, (2) how to use public relations and social media to respond to breaking news.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by helping forensic professionals understand how to effectively communicate difficult forensic cases to a lay public.

Just two months before the September 11th terrorist attacks, Dr. Judy Melinek began her training as a New York City forensic pathologist. With her husband, T.J., and their toddler, Daniel, holding down the home front, Dr. Melinek threw herself into the fascinating world of death investigation — performing autopsies, investigating death scenes, and counseling grieving relatives. *Working Stiff* chronicles Dr. Melinek's two years of training, taking readers behind the police tape of some of the most harrowing deaths in the "Big Apple," including a firsthand account of the events of September 11th, the subsequent anthrax bio-terrorism attack, and the disastrous crash of American Airlines Flight 587.

Lively, action-packed, and loaded with mordant wit, *Working Stiff* offers a firsthand account of daily life into one of America's most arduous professions and the unexpected challenges of shuttling between the domains of the living and the dead. The body never lies — and through the murders, accidents, and suicides that land on her table, Dr. Melinek lays bare the truth behind the glamorized depictions of autopsy work on shows like *CSI* and *Law & Order* to reveal the secret story of the real morgue.

Dr. Melinek will discuss how she and her writer husband collaboratively turned her daily journal about her forensic fellowship training at the New York City Office of the Chief Medical Examiner into a New York Times bestselling book. Writing clearly and effectively about forensic science draws candidates to professional training programs, increases the credibility and public profile of forensic scientists, and has the potential to increase both local and federal funding. Dr. Melinek will emphasize that in the digital age, where Twitter®, Facebook®, Instagram™, TV news, and bloggers set the tone and control the narrative around breaking cases, forensic scientists cannot continue to hide from the press behind an autopsy table or lab bench. Offices need to develop a public relations profile and utilize media relations to respond independently to press and public inquiries consistently — not just when there is a scandal or a high-profile case.

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#### **Forensic Pathology, Public Relations, Training**