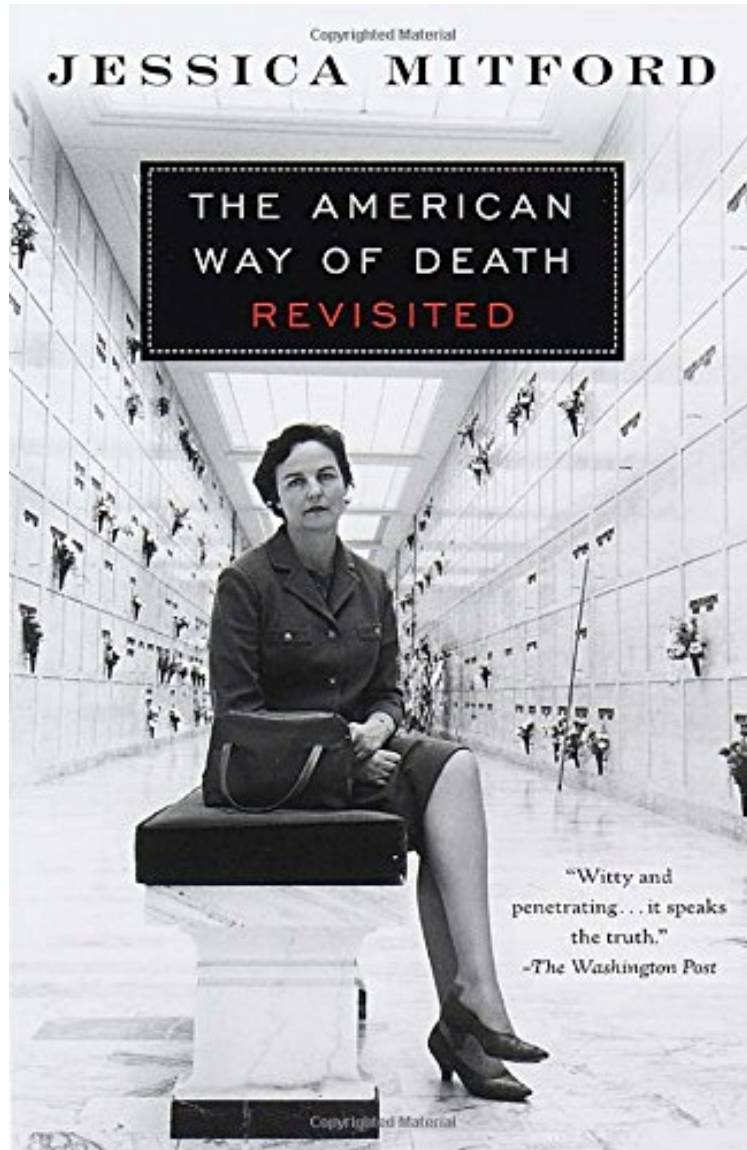


The American Way of Death Revisited

Jessica Mitford

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#98614 in Books Jessica Mitford 2000-01-04 2000-01-04 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .67 x 5.16l, .54 #File Name: 0679771867320 pages The American Way of Death Revisited | File size: 66.Mb

Jessica Mitford : The American Way of Death Revisited before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The American Way of Death Revisited:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Factually written, interesting and quite helpful for our purposes By C. Wayman Interesting book for use by a Historical Society. Thorough. Answers questions we didn't even know we had. No one found it graphic. They found it factually written. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. History made interesting. By Jan Funk Enchanted by the Mitford Clan. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Two

StarsBy Theresa LeClercNot what I expected. A bit of a let down.

Only the scathing wit and searching intelligence of Jessica Mitford could turn an expos of the American funeral industry into a book that is at once deadly serious and side-splittingly funny. When first published in 1963, this landmark of investigative journalism became a runaway bestseller and resulted in legislation to protect grieving families from the unscrupulous sales practices of those in "the dismal trade." Just before her death in 1996, Mitford thoroughly revised and updated her classic study. *The American Way of Death Revisited* confronts new trends, including the success of the profession's lobbyists in Washington, inflated cremation costs, the telemarketing of pay-in-advance graves, and the effects of monopolies in a death-care industry now dominated by multinational corporations. With its hard-nosed consumer activism and a satiric vision out of Evelyn Waugh's novel *The Loved One*, *The American Way of Death Revisited* will not fail to inform, delight, and disturb. "Brilliant--hilarious. . . . A must-read for anyone planning to throw a funeral in their lifetime."--New York Post "Witty and penetrating--it speaks the truth."--The Washington Post

.com *The American Way of Death Revisited* is almost unforgivably funny. Jessica Mitford's expos of the funeral industry, a number one bestseller upon first publication, is a model of muckraking--an almost incredible description of how undertakers in the U.S. assault people's souls and wallets. Before her death in 1996, Mitford devoted most of her energy to this revised edition of her masterwork, which zeroes in on funeral prepayment (the chapter is titled "Pay Now--Die Poorer"), the new multinational funeral corporations ("A Global Village of the Dead"), and the Federal Trade Commission's failure to enforce the laws the first edition of this book helped bring about. The book's greatest treasure is probably her shocking and hilarious description of exactly what happens in the process of embalming. Equally impressive, however, is her chapter called "The Nosy Clergy," which describes the collusion and competition between America's undertakers and its preachers. --Michael Joseph Gross From Publishers Weekly At the time of her death in 1996, Mitford had nearly completed this revision of her 1963 bestseller, a scathing critique of the U.S. funeral industry. Extensively revised, with subsequent additions by her husband, lawyer Robert Treuhaft, Lisa Carlson, an activist in the funeral-reform movement, and research assistant Karen Leonard, Mitford's mordant look at the excesses of the high-pressure salesmanship and lapses of taste of the "death-care industry" still rings true, and the book will evoke readers' ire. Mitford identifies disturbing new trends: cremation, once a low-cost option, has become increasingly expensive as mortuaries pressure the bereaved to buy a "traditional" funeral with all the accoutrements. Monopolistic companies have moved into the field and now account for 20% of the nation's funerals. Furthermore, she charges, the Federal Trade Commission's lax enforcement of its 1984 rule banning morticians' deceptive practices has contributed to an upward spiral of prices and profits. Other developments of the 1990s perceptively analyzed here include the refusal of many funeral directors to embalm AIDS victims and the growing popularity of low-cost funeral and memorial service organizations, which are listed in an appendix. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal For today's baby boomers, this updated classic will be an eye-opener about the exploitation and corruption of America's funeral industry. The total average cost of an adult's funeral today is \$7800, compared with \$750 in 1961. Mitford, who died in 1996, exposes the continuing scams of prepaid funeral and cemetery plans and funeral insurance policies and the loopholes of the Federal Trade Commission's "trade rule." Worst of all is the unscrupulous practice of monopoly ownership of independent funeral homes and cemeteries by multinational corporations, particularly Service Corporation International (SCI), with its strategies of "clustering" and anonymity. The current spirit of social activism evidenced by nonprofit funeral and memorial societies, particularly the Funeral and Memorial Societies (FAMSA), and the growing acknowledgment of consumers' legal rights to care for their own dead are serving as a check to the funeral industry's high costs and practices. Very interesting, informative, and easy to read, this book is written with wit, solid information, and refreshing bluntness. Everyone will benefit from it. -?Edward G. McCormack, Univ. of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast Lib., Long Beach Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.