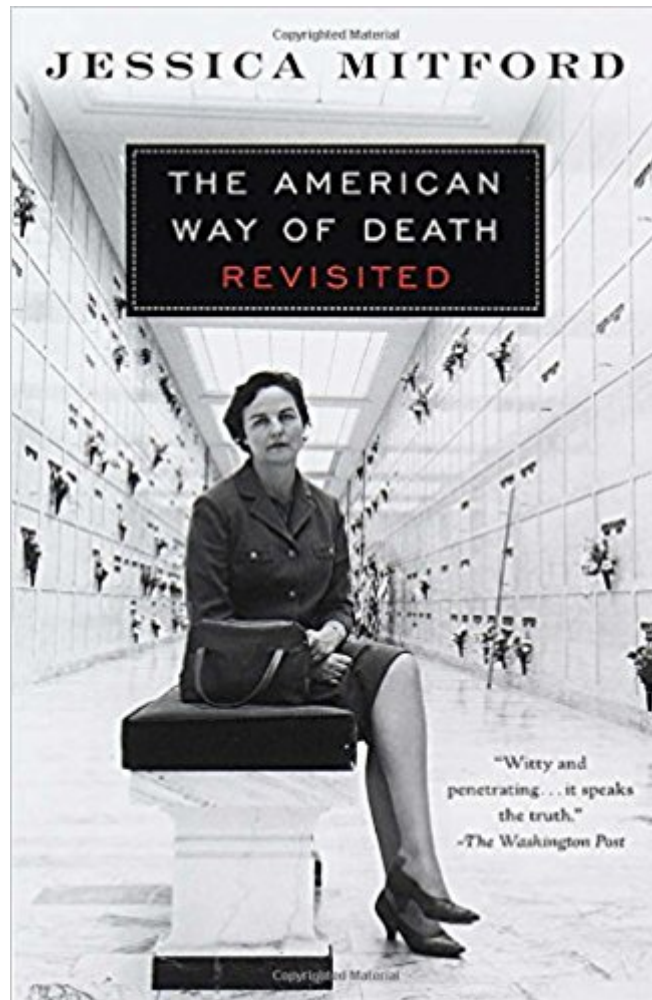




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# The American Way Of Death Revisited



## Synopsis

Only the scathing wit and searching intelligence of Jessica Mitford could turn an exposé 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*

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

*The American Way of Death Revisited* is almost unforgivably funny. Jessica Mitford's exposé 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 --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The first edition (in the '60s?) was mind-blowing. Not so much anymore, but still worth a read, particularly if you didn't catch it on the first go-round.

Gift

People need to read this long BEFORE they are faced with funereal business. I'm fortunate in that I live in a small town with a locally-owned, second generation funeral home. They respect their client's wishes and don't try to sell what isn't needed. The owner has read this book, as well, and loves it!

Very well researched book and very funny in parts... It uses facts, and not the opinions of the author. As an English immigrant to the US, it makes me even more aware of the yawning culture gap, but gives me hope in the statistics which show US trends as cheaper funerals and more

cremations....

Had to read for a college class and it was actually a very good book on a pretty awful topic. Mitford was truly a lady before her time, courageous. Don't plan a funeral without reading at least on Google about her and this book.

The book the funeral business wishes doesn't exist. Don't believe me? Next time you're in a Funeral home, mention the author's name, most funeral directors hate her for blowing the lid off their scam system of up-selling and praying on grieving families. Still as relevant today as when originally written!

A+ book! - entertaining, and startlingly informative. Loved it years ago and decided to treat myself to a 2nd read. It's a must read for anyone ever consider throwing a funeral.

I grew up across the street from a funeral parlor whose undertaker was a family friend, so the whole funeral experience always interested me. This book "opens the lid" so to speak on that business. Jessica's keen observations are laugh-out-loud funny at times. When this book was first released it really upset the boys in the undertaking biz. The book contrasts the American way of death with the British way, a great read in itself. Personally I preferred the first half of the book before the later chapters where the narrative kinda bogged down with statistics. This book has become a classic that should not be missed.

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