

Dying to Have a Baby

A True Story

Robert Zausner

Excerpt from Chapter 5. Suspicion

Tony feels numb. Suzanne's body lay in her bed in the ICU. He sits and waits for the others to arrive. Then word comes that an autopsy is planned. "No way!" Tony protests when told that Dr. Halbert Fillinger, head of the Medical Examiner's Office in Montgomery County, has notified Holy Redeemer Hospital that his office will take charge of the body in order to perform an autopsy.

Tony refuses to release his wife's body. Suzanne's parents, who by this time have made it to the hospital, are also against an autopsy, wishing to spare their daughter's body that final insult. Jeff Wester, Suzanne's brother, stands next to Tony at Suzanne's bedside. They won't budge, they say. No autopsy.

"It won't add anything to do an autopsy," Tony tells Holy Redeemer's medical director, a man named Charles Wagner who has rushed to the floor to try to calm Tony. Tony is upset, cursing Fillinger and even castigates the coroner's wife, who worked as a midwife in a competing OB/GYN practice.

"Tony, you're being unreasonable," Wagner implores.

"Bullshit!"

"Tony ..."

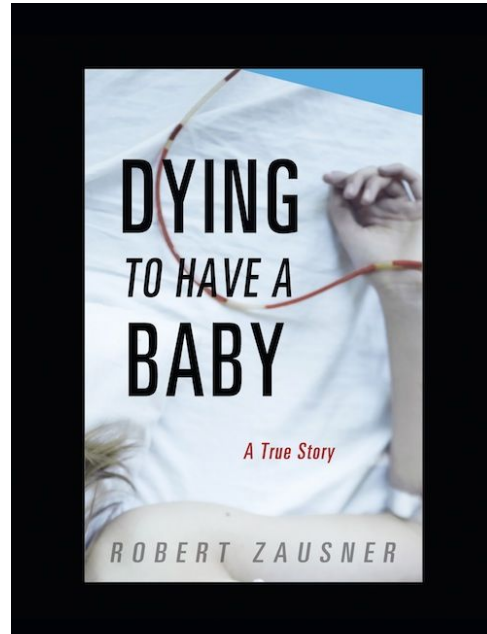
"No. No autopsy. Period. End of discussion."

"It's automatic in a case like this."

"A case like what?"

"Because of the circumstances ..."

"What damned circumstances?"



“Tony,” he says finally, “they have to rule out foul play.”

“Foul play? Foul play?” Tony almost laughs at the words.

“Really, Tony. They need to do the autopsy.”

“No, not until we get this resolved. You hold them off. I’ll be back.”

He and Jeff walk off, away from the rest of the family, and call Tony’s business lawyer, Gary Jaffe. Tony feels a sense of shock. Is he somehow a suspect in Suzanne’s death? Jaffe tells him he is wrong to try to prevent an autopsy.

“You’re making it worse, Tony. It makes it look like you’re hiding something.”

“What do I have to hide? I’m not hiding *anything*.” ...