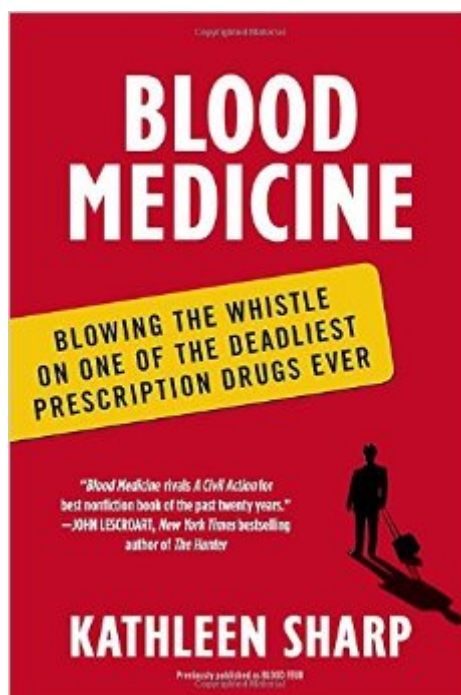


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Blood Medicine: Blowing The Whistle On One Of The Deadliest Prescription Drugs Ever



Synopsis

“Blood Feud rivals A Civil Action for best non-fiction book of the past twenty years.” John Lescroart, New York Times bestselling author of Damage Procrit seemed like a biotech miracle, promising a golden age in medical care. Developed in the 1980s by Amgen and licensed to the pharmaceutical giant, Johnson & Johnson, the drug (AKA Epogen and Aranesp) soon generated billions in annual revenue and still does. In 2012, world famous cyclist, Olympian, and Tour de France champion Lance Armstrong was banned from professional cycling on doping charges for using EPO (the blanket name for the drugs Procrit and Epogen), resulting in a global controversy about abuse, big pharmaceutical companies, and the lies and inaccuracies concerning performance-enhancing drugs. Mark Duxbury was a J&J salesman who once believed in the blood-booster, setting record sales and winning company awards. Then Duxbury started to learn unsavory truths about Procrit and J&J’s business practices. He was fired and filed a whistleblower suit to warn the public. When Jan Schlichtman (A Civil Action) learned of Duxbury’s crusade, he signed on. Now, he’s fighting on behalf of cancer patients and for every American who trusts Big Pharma with his life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Kathleen Sharp has managed to expose a criminal fraud by venerable Johnson & Johnson, a scheme ripping off billions of dollars from Medicare (and all of us taxpayers) and leading thousands of patients to early and grisly death. Her book Blood Feud documents J&J’s calculated corporate disregard for the safety of its drug "Procrit", and for the lives of its customers. She reveals how J&J

gamed the toothless FDA to be able to sell an unproven and dangerous drug at higher and higher doses for unapproved indications. And she shows us all of this in a breezy style, rich with juicy detail, while taking us on the road with a couple of regular guys, Mark and Dean, two J&J sales reps. They join the firm fired up with the best of intentions, and gradually come to realize that their employer is training them to use methods that they discover are illegal to sell a product that proves lethal. Mark expresses his concern. Complications ensue. Corporate machinations lead to litigation and Mark and Dean's whistle-blowing lawsuit heads to the Supreme Court. It's a great read! (The book also notes that while the Department of Justice is still on the sidelines, not seeking justice for the Medicare fraud, it is run by Eric Holder, a former partner in the high-powered legal firm defending J&J.)

I had feared that this kind of in-depth reporting and riveting storytelling was just about obsolete. Happy then to read this amazing account of heroism and corporate fraud. The storyline about how J&J and Ortho executives "gaslighted" two former sales reps who turned whistleblowers on the companies' greed and fraud, is chilling.

The best John Grisham novel you've ever read isn't by John Grisham, and isn't a novel. It's by Kathleen Sharp, and it's called "Blood Feud." All the elements of a great "airport thriller" are here -- the well-meaning good-guy characters who get sucked into a horrible conspiracy to hide the truth, the evil corporate enterprise desperate to inflate the bottom line with a product that is literally killing people, and the questions -- will the truth come out? Will justice triumph? Can it? With her sharp prose, great eye for detail and talent for crafting the narrative, Kathleen Sharp draws you into the story and leaves you with a sinking feel in the pit of your stomach. This happened. We consumers are virtually defenseless against the Big Pharma juggernaut. Maybe this book will be a first step in changing the system. Let's hope so.

We all see those TV ads touting the latest drug for some disease or condition and assume that the products have been tested and declared safe. Well, Blood Feud will change the way you look at those ads forever. The book is a page-turning read about the development and marketing of a best-selling but dangerous drug, combined with the tragic story of a salesman who gradually figured out the truth and tried to fight a pharmaceutical giant through the courts. In one vivid scene after another, and with a cast of well-drawn characters, Sharp lays bare the scary and costly ramifications of our labyrinthine drug-selling system.

I agree with the others who loved the tragic and true story of two drug reps trying to expose the unethical and illegal practices of a pharmaceutical giant in marketing a dangerous biotech-based drug. I'd like to add another factor that makes this book stand out -- the pacing. I ordered it at the same time that I ordered Jeffrey Eugenides' new book, *The Marriage Plot*. Usually I race through fiction and leave nonfiction for weeks on end, reading a bit at a time. I started both books and quickly put the novel aside. That's never happened before. At first I was a little disbelieving of the astonishing attention to detail, and the precisely remembered conversations. I'm a narrative nonfiction writer myself, and for my last book lawyers carefully removed any remnants of conversation I could not directly back up. But *Blood Feud* is different. The author did indeed have access to detailed, riveting information, thanks to the careful record keeping of the two protagonists. It all rings true in a way that other books in the genre do not (i.e. how, exactly, could a different present-day writer have known what an illiterate woman thought in a bathtub half a century ago at the moment she somehow discovered her cervical cancer???) *Blood Feud* was one of the best reads I've had in years.

Kathleen Sharp writes like a practiced crime thriller composer. But this fine writer is a journalist and researcher and reporter and serves with this book to give a wakeup call to all of the medical profession and the general populace of the country. Despite the fact that this book is all based on fact and is a true story, *BLOOD FEUD* will read like a brilliant thriller and at the same time will make you think twice every time you hear or read about a new 'miracle drug' on the market. The story is now well known thanks to the exposure this book has given to us and to the other reporting that is surfacing. The facts are about how the pharmaceutical giants introduce promising major discovery drugs before they are fully tested by the FDA. It is more a story about the Big Man status of corporate manipulation, placing hasty money and greed before public safety. The drug in question is Procrit, a much anticipated and desperately need blood booster and anti-anemia drug. Once released on the market we learn of the manipulations of a drug rep Mark Duxbury and his relentless drive to make a fortune for his company and himself. Greed goes hand in hand with fraud and the story reveals how illegal actions resulted in a cover-up and ultimately an investigation and resolution to stop the sales of Procrit through the labors of lawyer Jan Schlichtmann who brought the cover-up to the table and helped reduce the threat to our nation's crippled healthcare delivery program. This is powerful writing of the first order and, not unlike the writings of Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward on Watergate. Read like a novel, but recognize it as a wakeup call to the machinations of the

pharmaceutical companies. Grady Harp, January 12

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