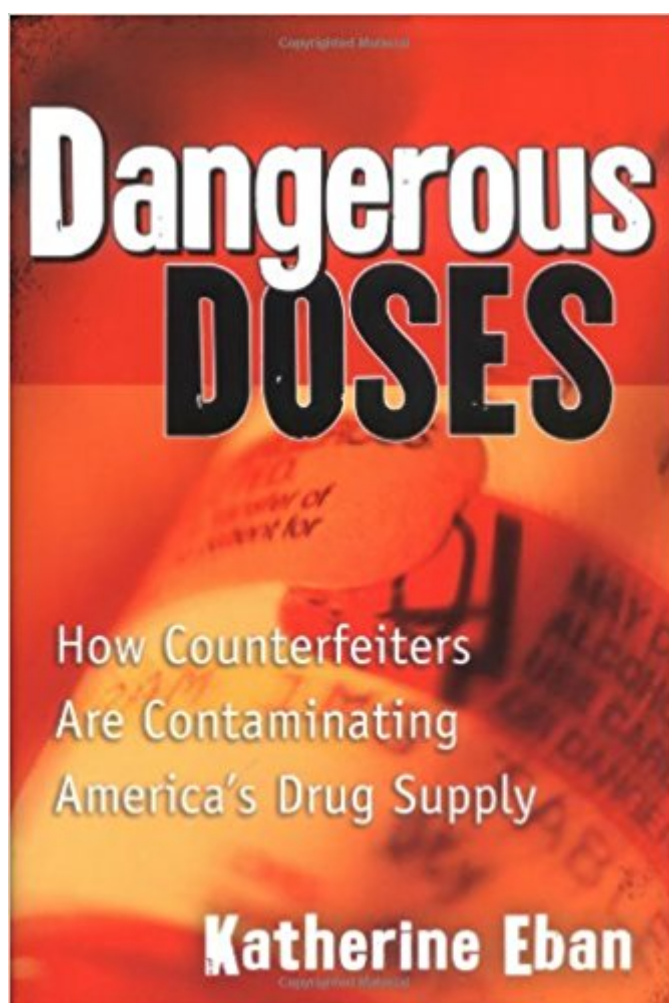


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Dangerous Doses: How Counterfeiters Are Contaminating America's Drug Supply



Synopsis

In the tradition of the great investigative classics, *Dangerous Doses* exposes the dark side of America's pharmaceutical trade. Stolen, compromised, and counterfeit medicine increasingly makes its way into a poorly regulated distribution system-where it may reach unsuspecting patients who stake their lives on its effectiveness. Katherine Eban's hard-hitting exploration of America's secret ring of drug counterfeiters takes us to Florida, where tireless investigators follow the trail of medicine stolen in a seemingly minor break-in as it funnels into a sprawling national network of drug polluters. Their pursuit stretches from a strip joint in South Miami to the halls of Congress as they battle entrenched political interests and uncover an increasing threat to America's health. With the conscience of a crusading reporter, Eban has crafted a riveting narrative that shows how, when we most need protection, we may be most at risk.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Of the many well-documented horror stories associated with the U.S. Healthcare System, none are more shocking and hard to believe than that exposed by investigative reporter Katherine Eban in *Dangerous Doses: How Counterfeiters are Contaminating America's Drug Supply*. By riding shotgun with a small group of investigators in South Florida who refer to themselves as "The Five Horsemen of the Apocalypse," Eban outlines in chilling detail a vast system of criminality underpinning the wholesale trade of prescription drugs throughout the country. The Horsemen are a committed and colorful cast of characters not even the best crime novelist could create, who are

hopelessly underpaid, rarely sleep, receive little respect, and face bureaucratic obstacles at every turn as they fight to keep tainted drugs out of hospitals and off pharmacy shelves. Their chief target is Michael Carlow, a flamboyant ex-con turned pharmaceutical wholesaler who has amassed millions through the sale of both stolen and fake prescription drugs. The more evidence the Horsemen uncover about Carlow's network of shell companies, phony labeling techniques, Medicare scams, and other tricks of the trade, the more deadly the picture becomes. By the end, you don't only want to see Carlow and his associates behind bars, but the entire pharmaceutical industry put on trial. You also want to give a copy of *Dangerous Doses* to everyone you know, as it is not just a great page turner but an important book that demands the widest possible audience. --Patrick Jennings

It's hard to imagine that, with the U.S. government's oversight of the development and production of pharmaceuticals, the pills you get from your pharmacist may be counterfeit. But according to medical reporter Eban, those pills often pass through dozens of hands, exchanged in dark parking lots and the backrooms of strip clubs for thousands of dollars in cash, possibly resold and relabeled several times. It might contain a twentieth of the dosage written on the label, or nothing but tap water. Eban, formerly with the *New York Times*, follows a group of five investigators to reveal how pervasive a problem drug counterfeiting is in the U. S. Operation Stone Cold, as the South Florida investigation was called, comprised a hodgepodge of pharmacists and policemen who shared a fanatical devotion to stopping adulterated drugs from reaching the public, despite uninterested supervisors, understaffed regulatory agencies and state laws that made offenses almost impossible to prosecute. The book reads like a good novel, though the cast of villains is so dizzying and the timeline so complicated that the action is sometimes hard to follow. Unfortunately there is no happy ending – the fight to protect the domestic drug supply continues. If this book receives wide attention, it could deal another blow to an already reeling pharmaceutical industry and users of prescription drugs will be wary after reading it. (May) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Scary, crazy, great read.... freaks me out that this is all true.

Item was exactly as described and received quickly. Thank you!

I am using some of the facts in this book for my novel writing. Thank you Katherine Eban for writing

this book

Katherine Eban, *Dangerous Doses: How Counterfeiters Are Contaminating America's Drug Supply* (Harcourt, 2005) Have you ever taken a medication and felt no effect, or far less effect than you expected to have? Put it off to building up a tolerance? Yeah, me too. After reading this, however, I have to wonder. The four-hundred-odd pages of *Dangerous Doses* fly by rather quickly for a piece of nonfiction; Eban takes you inside the Horsemen of the Apocalypse, the South Florida interdepartmental task force aimed at bringing down those who would tamper with America's drug supply for personal gain. What I (and, I'm sure, many other readers) didn't expect, though, is just how much work the Horsemen had (and still have, in many cases, as of this writing) ahead of them. It would seem that counterfeit prescription medication is not a few isolated cases here and there we hear on the news, but a very, very big business that has reached its tendrils into most every state in the Union and affects untold billions of dollars' worth of merchandise. (The book's biggest shock, for me, came when one of the drugs mentioned is one I actually take.) This is scary stuff. It's not just highly recommended because piece of nonfiction this readable are rare birds indeed, but because this is something you need to know about, especially if you or your family members take prescription drugs. Get it. Read it. ****

White collar rarely reaches the headlines in the United States, not enough flash and no blood to show up on the TV screen. White collar crime likewise gets less police or congressional attention. Even when, as in this case lives are at stake, there is usually little attention being paid at any level. In this book, Ms. Eban, an investigative reporter specializing in the medical area reports on the rise in counterfeit drugs being sold through the traditional drug outlets such as hospitals, pharmacies and nursing homes. She exposes the way drugs are really distributed in the United States. What would at first appear to be a straight forward path from licensed manufacturer selling to licensed wholesalers, selling to licensed pharmacies turns out to be much more confusing than that. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of small companies involved with questionable licensing, inspection, quality control and some of these are definitely people you don't want handling the drugs your life depends on. Ms. Eban points out the problems with the drug distribution channels (another of those where the companies see no need for governmental control as they are going to police themselves). She also reports on numerous cases where definite illegal activities including mis-labelling, counterfeiting, and theft have been involved, with the bad drugs then entering the legitimate distribution system. Ms. Eban estimates that as much as 1% of the drugs sold through

pharmacies are tainted in some manner. Another aspect I hope she investigates for her next book, I have seen estimates that half or more of the drugs ordered from Internet companies is really just sugar pills.

The author, with a background in medical investigative reporting, presents an interesting "story" whose main theme is that wholesale distribution of medicines has serious problems, counterfeiting drugs, stealing-and-reselling drugs, to name a few. While the story is well researched, the narrative style of the book (almost like a Robin Cook medical thriller) is a little distracting to the main theme. While the "fictional narrative" approach can certainly keep the readers engaged, its sheer pace (compliment) in this context appears to mute the main points the author wants to make. Nevertheless, the book raises some serious concerns and provides a significant starting point for anyone interested in understanding issues related to the 'medical supply chains'. A good read.

While the FDA and drug companies rail about the potential dangers of imported drugs, they ignore or downplay reports about adulterated, counterfeit drugs from within the U.S., and fight efforts to improve the reliability of the system. Meanwhile, law-enforcement efforts to correct the problem are frequently blocked by political intervention for donors, legal threats, a patch-work of varying State laws, fraudulent paperwork, regulators giving drug wholesaling licenses to known criminals, and inter-departmental squabbling over who's in charge or gets the credit. Sources of problem drugs include theft from warehouses, trucks, and hospitals, diversion from lower-priced markets (eg. foreign sales), purchase from Medicaid recipients, relabeling vials containing weak doses with fraudulent labels claiming much stronger contents, and pills made from worthless ingredients. The book also summarizes the serious impact in two instances of seriously ill patients receiving adulterated drugs.

This is an outstanding book every American should read. This book was recommended to me by a Vice President of a large mail order pharmacy corporation. I am the Assistant Vice President for Supply Chain Pharmacy Operations of a large healthcare system. As such I am responsible for making our Supply Chain Pharmacy Operations more safe and efficient. This book has been an eye opener for me. I have already quoted it several times in meetings and on conference calls. We all need to be engaged in making our healthcare supply chain as safe and efficient as possible. This is a non-fiction book, but it reads like a fiction one because its so unbelievable. It could very easily be made into a movie and be very successful in that media.

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