



The Secret History of the War on Cancer

Devra Davis

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The War on Cancer set out to find, treat, and cure a disease. Left untouched were many of the things known to cause cancer, including tobacco, the workplace, radiation, or the global environment. Proof of how the world in which we live and work affects whether we get cancer was either overlooked or suppressed. This has been no accident. The War on Cancer was run by leaders of industries that made cancer-causing products, and sometimes also profited from drugs and technologies for finding and treating the disease. Filled with compelling personalities and never-before-revealed information, *The Secret History of the War on Cancer* shows how we began fighting the wrong war, with the wrong weapons, against the wrong enemies—a legacy that persists to this day. This is the gripping story of a major public health effort diverted and distorted for private gain. A portion of the profits from this book will go to support research on cancer prevention.

The Secret History of the War on Cancer Details

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From Reader Review The Secret History of the War on Cancer for online ebook

Books Ring Mah Bell says

After some reflection, I think my original 5 star rating was a bit much. Those 5 stars were an emotional rating on my part due to a recent and devastating diagnosis that hit way too close to home.

But look, there is something to this. The author wanted to write this book 20 years ago while employed by the National Academy of Sciences. When she told her boss that several institutions and research academies wanted to publish papers she had written on the war on cancer, her boss told her, "it had better be a good book." She explains that it should be and expects a nice advance from it. He tells her she'll need it. "Of course, I'm not telling you what to do... I'm telling you that you can't write a book critical of the cancer enterprise and hold a senior position at this institution."

So she didn't. She gathered more info over the next 20 years and then wrote her book.

I'm not so sure that the war on cancer is so secret. Really. There are competing interests and money talks. So what if your child has cancer. We need to keep profits rolling in! Sorry!

From the book:

Astonishing alliances between naive or far too clever academics and folks with major economic interests in selling potentially cancerous materials have kept us from figuring out whether or not many modern products affect our chances of developing cancer.

I think a cartoon from 1977 portrays the battle perfectly. A government official stands behind a scientist, saying, "Could you hurry up and find a cure for cancer? That would be so much easier than prevention." Behind the government official, there are folks representing food and drug, chemical and pesticide, asbestos and tobacco interests.

Yep.

So, screw you cancer, and screw you, cancer enterprise. Screw the profits. We need more information on prevention and we need a damn cure.

People are dying, you greedy assholes!

Villate says

This book should have been titled "Why Corporations Are Even More Evil Than You Thought." There is a lot of interesting information here, but it is presented repetitively and sometimes with annoying personal stories about Davis' family and friends and their varying experiences with cancer as well as some of her own rather New Age-y beliefs about God and death and other things. Some parts were confusing because the same people kept popping up and being re-introduced in each chapter. I found myself thinking, "Didn't I already read about this?" It seemed as though the chapters were written to be read separately rather than as

part of a whole. There is also a bit of self-justification in her side comments about the agencies and organizations she has worked with that I found disingenuous, such as her noble refusal to take funding from some disreputable corporation or other.

There was some interesting stuff about the origins of the American Cancer Society and the huge (and hugely profitable) cancer treatment industry, but a lot of what she presents is pretty obvious (producers of toxic substances lie, cheat, wrangle, legislate, bribe, lobby, falsify, and pretty much do anything they can to prevent people from finding out that their products are dangerous, what a shock! And advertisers and PR agencies help them? I never would have guessed!) and by now well-known, if not well-publicized. What she does not address much is the actual number of people who are affected. It's one thing to say that people who work with various poisonous chemicals have "10 times more risk of x type of cancer," but entirely another to know exactly how many people actually GET that cancer. For instance, I was surprised to find out that the incidence of lung cancer in smokers is something like 16%, meaning that 16% of regular smokers get lung cancer (I don't remember the exact number - it may even have been lower than that). Now that's a lot of cancer, and it's completely preventable so it's stupid that people are getting it and I'm not endorsing smoking or anything like that, but from the commercials and ads and information put out by the anti-smoking groups, you'd think that all you have to do is try one cigarette and you're going to get lung cancer and die, when the truth is a lot of people - a huge majority - smoke regularly for a very long time and do not suffer from cancer, or if they do it is at the end of their lives (my grandfather smoked three to four packs a day, plus a couple of pipes at night and was not sick until he was in his 80s), when they're old and going to die anyway, or at least that's how it looks to your average young person. What percentage of steel workers actually develop cancer that can be traced to their work or is likely to have resulted from their work? How many people does this work out to being? We never know. Davis does address the difficulty of trying to figure things like this out, but there is a tone of "well, it doesn't matter because even one death is too many!" That is true, but how many other lives are saved and improved by the chemicals and plastics and other things that seem to sicken those who produce them? It's a nasty, terrible thing to think about.

Along that line, I was struck by the complete ignoring of the role of the workers in many of these cases. People would go to work in the asbestos mines and the chemical factories and the steel mills and come home with coughs they couldn't get rid of and burns on their skin and growths where there shouldn't be growths AND SOMETIMES THEIR BONES WOULD JUST DISSOLVE and they would see their coworkers developing cancers and illnesses and they just believed their bosses when they said, "Oh don't worry about it." Really? And this still happens! I have seen it myself in people who work in a computer chip manufacturing plant near where I live. They don't even ask for protective gloves when the acids and metals they work with burn their hands. It's almost a macho thing to suck it up and keep on working. Their bosses were wrong to lie and to hide what they knew about the dangerousness of their workplaces, but what about the underlying ignorance and lack of critical thought exhibited by the workers? This is even more disturbing to me than the greed and corruption of the industries and governments that caused the problem. Davis' suggestion that we form a sort of "truth and reconciliation committee" to get companies to stop hiding their knowledge about the dangerousness of their products is not particularly helpful. Truth and reconciliation are great, but how about we teach our children to ask questions and stand up for themselves rather than selling their bodies and their health for a job? How about we do that for ourselves? We all know that heads of companies will do whatever it takes to keep making money, but how many of these people were in unions that were more interested in upping their wages than in making sure the workers had protective gear, however primitive it may have been? Even more frightening, how many of them were so desperate for any kind of work that they were willing to suffer the effects even though they knew, consciously or unconsciously, that they were in trouble? How many of us are willing to expose ourselves to more and more radiation and chemical poisons with the technology and other comforts we love? I have never intended to get my kids cell phones, but now I am even more against them!

I found the final chapters, in which Davis discusses "green" technologies that may replace some of the dangerous stuff we use now, rather preachy and pie-in-the-sky. Recycling and other "green" methods have their own problems, not the least of which are their cost and the fact that many of them just plain don't work. Solar energy, for instance, is great on a small scale, but hideously expensive to set up and not particularly efficient. Buildings made of renewable resources like bamboo and cotton and such are nice, but how long are they going to stand compared to drywall? Hopefully for a long time, but we just don't know yet.

In sum, this book did make me rethink some of my opinions about the way corporations function and their responsibility to society. I consider myself a believer in capitalism and a libertarian in most respects, meaning in this case that I don't believe that governments should heavily regulate industries. After reading this book, I believe that governments **SHOULD** be able to monitor and regulate industries, particularly those that produce unstable and possibly toxic substances and technologies. However, and this is a big however, Davis shows that in many cases, the government is complicit in the cover-up for various reasons (most of them having to do with money - another huge shock! Not) and therefore not able or willing to carry out its responsibility to protect its citizens. So what is to be done? There are many people to blame for the unnecessarily high levels of toxic substances we cope with in our everyday life, but little that the average person can do about it. Davis mentions a few brave pioneers and activists who sacrifice their careers and reputations and sometimes their own health to try to get people in power to make the needed changes, but they have little to no effect in the face of massive profits, growth and progress, corruption, and the strange ability we human beings have to ignore and discount what we don't want to believe, even when it's right in front of our eyes. It kind of makes me want to move into a log cabin in the woods and raise my own crops and chickens, but then I'd be too afraid of what's in the well water to be able to sleep at night.

AJ says

3.5 stars

It was interesting reading this book after having finished *The Emperor of All Maladies* by Siddhartha Mukherjee recently. Both books are fascinating, in depth, and have completely different looks at cancer. While both books are about a depressing topic - cancer - Mukherjee's book left me feeling upbeat and hopeful while Davis's book left me feeling angry and cheated.

The Secret History of the War on Cancer explains in great detail why cancer is so pervasive and why we are told that treatment will be our savior instead of prevention. By detailing some major cancer cover-ups from tobacco to asbestos to other workplace hazards, Davis makes it clear that industry will do nothing to lose any hint of profitability, even if it means causing cancer in thousands of humans. Since Big Tobacco came up with the genius idea of fomenting doubt to weasel out of admitting that their product was killing people, industry today has adopted the same tactics and insist that without major epidemiological studies, nobody can prove that anything is carcinogenic. Unfortunately, this leaves us humans as a giant science experiment, and sadly, thousands of people will get sick and die as a result.

I was glad this book was written by a scientist, as Davis is clearly aware of the pros and cons of medical research and epidemiological studies. While industry touts large scale epidemiological studies as the only way to prove if certain things lead to cancer, Davis rightly notes that research of this scope is always difficult, especially when possible carcinogens are so pervasive as to leave almost no control groups behind.

When you talk about the combined effects of many possible hazards, the research becomes almost impossible. Industry banks on that, because they can use it to say that there is no proof that x, y, or z is harmful to human health.

This book left me wishing I lived on a rational planet where people used the precautionary principle, where human beings aren't used as lab rats in a gigantic experiment so that CEOs can take home multi-million dollar bonuses at our collective expense.

Maya says

I don't even know where to start; I can't review this book in the sense of "here's what was good and bad about it." For me, this book is too big and important for that.

Dr. Davis recounts in almost excruciating detail the painful facts about when scientists knew that cigarettes, benzene, and asbestos caused death and why and how that information was kept hidden for decades. At that point in the book I was thoroughly depressed (for one thing, how could all those company officials, scientists and doctors behave so cavalierly with other people's lives?), but at least relieved that we now know how dangerous those things are.

The book from that point on proceeds to explain how the exact same strategies of confusion, obsfucation, and hiding research as "trade secrets" along with some newer strategies of attacking scientific studies are leading to preventable deaths every single day. Her language and conclusions are very controlled, and she gives the benefit of the doubt in situations where I would want to give a jail sentence. This is a serious book, she is not a conspiracy theorist.

Much as I felt after reading Exposed, I feel again: Why do we choose to wait until proof in the form of thousands of injured and dead people piles up? Why do we choose to weigh the balance in favor of industry over health every single time? I have great faith in our ingenuity; if we currently have a dangerous product, like PVC (for one example), I know we can come up with an alternative if we just try. But we won't try if the manufacturers of PVC keep all the information about its dangers secret because we won't know we need to. Why don't we choose to shift the balance toward saving lives first?

When it seems like cancer is everywhere, why don't we know what causes it is a reasonable question. What Dr. Davis tells us in this book is that we may in fact know what causes a great many cancers, but that information is being kept hidden and with it our ability to prevent the disease. I'm glad, very very glad, that we have talented and brilliant people searching every day for better ways to cure cancer. But I'd still rather prevent it and I think we have enough talented and brilliant people to do both. But we can't have secrets and progress both.

Steven Magee says

The primary cause of cancer is incorrect human environmental conditions. Devra Davis has done a wonderful job of documenting the known causes of cancer and the extensive web of corporate and government deceit in this area. She states "Most people have no idea that OSHA is a ghost and has been so

for years". Having had my health damaged by a large utility solar photovoltaic system in 2009 and interacted with the OSHA system regarding it, I have to support her statement. I was glad to see that electromagnetic fields (EMF) are mentioned and concerns raised regarding the cellular mobile telephone industry. I live in a community that has both cell phone towers and transmitting utility meters and they are extensively affecting the growth of my plants in the garden and inside the home. It is in line with the fatigue and buzzing "microwave" hearing that I display. Is cancer the next step for me? All of this is currently being ignored by the government while Autism has been following the rise of cell phones and cellular towers for the past decade in the USA. Did you know that wireless radiation can act like a growth hormone? I left the workplace in 2011 and that has coincided with regaining a level of health that is comparable to my teenage years. There are no doubts that for many people their workplaces are toxic and that it is affecting their health to the point of inducing cancer into them. This book does a good job of showing you some of the known cancer causing agents that you should be wary of both in the home and workplace environments. It also discusses some of the known cancer causing towns and cities that you should avoid living in. Highly recommended!

Kathleen Hagen says

The Secret History of the War on Cancer, by Devra Davis, borrowed from the National Library Service for the Blind.

This book comprised 18 hours of audio time. Devra Davis is an epidemiologist from the University of Pittsburgh, who published in 2007 a very comprehensive history of the checkered history of searching for a cancer cure-primarily hindered by the fact that many of the same companies that pay for the research and/or cancer drug experiments, also create the problems of pollution. This book mainly deals with the environmental hazards placed in our way by companies who are too greedy to consider ways of producing products that wouldn't be so hazardous to the public. The author is very personally involved in this book. She discusses the cancers suffered by both of her parents, who died of cancer, and of her best friend who survived breast cancer but died of brain cancer. She reveals what she found out from the hundreds of interviews she did with people throughout the country who suffered all kinds of pollution. She spent much time uncovering the tobacco companies' secret knowledge for over 50 years of how dangerous cigarettes were and of the government's willingness during most of that time to act in collusion with the companies. It's a chilling book with always new hazards to consider, one of the most recent ones being cell phone towers and power lines and how they may be disrupting our lives.

Kelly says

This was such a hard book to read. My range of emotion jumped frequently between extreme sadness and extreme anger, with a sense of defeat somewhere in the middle. I'm not ignorant to a lot of what she touched on, however, to have it come from such a well respected, credible and experienced epidemiologist was a big affirmation to what I've heard. What was also new to me is that the powers that be have been far from ignorant for a very, very long time and have chosen to ignore the repercussions of our modern Industrial Age. Some assuming that our future generations will have the knowledge and technology to figure out how to fix the damage we've done, some just not giving a sh*t because it's going to be another generations problem and there is money to be made now. I had fallen in the former category for a large part of my life.

Partly from youth and ignorance and partly because I had no children. Now that I am a mother and have matured quite a bit, these things mean a whole lot to me and I don't think there is an easy way out of this mess that has been created. That is where the sense of defeat comes in. I don't think my sons generation is going to be given an opportunity to learn from our mistakes, I think they will be forced to. I don't believe they will have the liberty of choice.

Brian says

An eye opener of a book that certainly makes one question so many issues focussing on cancer, its programs of treatments, and an eye opener.

Some was hard to read, partly because I am fighting a blood cancer at this moment and that I lost my mother 2 years ago to terminal brain cancer.

A book that certainly inspired me in one sense and enraged me the next. A very in depth read and one that I read, examined and made notes as I read along. I read much of this book multiple times during this lengthy read to ensure that I not only had the information correct but that I could try to corroborate it as well.

I urge anyone who has cancer, or has a relative, or friend who has cancer to read this book. Better yet, I think it is VERY IMPORTANT that those not even diagnosed with cancer read this book.

Richard says

I heard Dr. Davis on a conference call and was excited with her observations and command of the issues.

Now after reading her book, I believe that my observations and conclusions are needed.

The reading was not medically detailed, well documented and laid out in good order. The epilogue was very pithy and sobering.

What catches my attention is that the concerns about cancer are about to escalate to new heights, since more and more cancer is being experienced by scientists, researchers, academia and doctors. Dr. Davis has not read the paper done by Dr. Alfred Stock, Organic Chemist of Germany. We are being poisoned systematically, in small doses. The trick is to identify body burden, reduce body burden and eliminate the sources.

Dr. Linus Pauling was spot on when he said, "there are 1000 new chemicals and compounds being developed every month." With those kind of numbers, science will study cancer forever. It is like trying to board a bullet train as it passes the station.

Dr. Davis uses all encompassing words that keep the general public off balance like environment, toxins, poisons, dioxins and industry. That's all fine for the book but if answers are what she is looking for, she should be focusing on the two sub-categories of poisons.

I suggest a number of actions for the Doctor, 1)Identify the sources of heavy metals that are consumed by the public, 2) Prioritize them in order of hazard 3)Make this information public asap and 4) Listen to the Rabbi

when he said, "It is not for you to complete the task. But you must begin."

No cure will ever be found for cancer, it can only be prevented. The task begins with you and ends with the good health of your descendants.

Brian says

Being a anti-cancer warrior, I figured I should read this book to get the inside scoop. I found the the first couple of chapters hard to read but eventually decided to skip ahead and the rest of the book was actually engrossing. The first chapters represented what I liked least about the book: a style of writing that involves drifting in and out of detailed backstory, personal anecdotes, and historical vignettes. For instance, she starts a chapter describing the travels of a pathologist from Chicago to Brussels to attend an influential cancer conferene in 1936. This story then yields way to how cancer was known and treated in Egypt in 900 BC, then how x-rays were developed, then back to that cancer congress, then the story of an immigrant working in an IBM "clean room" that develops cancer, etc. I guess the personalized stories and switching back and forth from storylines is supposed to lure you in, but I found it frustrating to have to wade through - and often unclear what the point was. I think the book could be half as long and cut out a lot of the anecdotal implications of environmental hazards that make the book seem sketchy.

Eventually it became more focused. There are sections on the histories of the American Cancer Society and the National Cancer Institute which were very interesting, and still relevant today. A central theme of the book that comes through is: why does it take us so long to identify and rectify major threats to our health? Why did it take so many smoking- and asbestos-related deaths before we could agree they were a bad idea? She seems to believe that our reliance on good epidemiology essentially leads to an unacceptable delay in preventing harms. She goes even farther by implying that the rise of epidemiology as a field (and our most famous epidemiologists) was shepharded by the tobacco and asbestos industries, who sought to dismiss animal experiments and embrace long term cohort studies as the only relevant form of evidence. In this way they could delay any regulatory action until long term studies were completed. She also takes a fairly hard line on the consulting fees accepted by our most famous epidemiologists from the tobacco, asbestos, and other industries. This section will give epidemiologists something to ponder in thinking about causality and public health (and their epi heros). We can only show that something is harmful after a large enough number of people have died or developed a disease. Is this retrospective approach the preferred framework for protecting the public? Should more weight be given to animal or in vitro studies, or should we continue to encourage and demand what Davis considers involuntary experimentation on large populations of humans? Obviously this is a complicated question.

I thought calling this book the "Secret History of the War on Cancer" was a little exaggerated - I can't say I was shocked about too much of anything. Overall, I did learn some very intriguing things - things that I feel I should have known about as a cancer epidemiologist.

Karan says

About two-thirds done and don't think i can finish this one.

Very poorly footnoted, too many personal anecdotes (eg, "My husband's uncle says, based on his experience in WW2 Alabama war munitions factory ..." "When my cousin Mark worked in the Nixon Administration's

War on Cancer ..."), a lot of vagueness that didn't need to be vague ("a relatively recent study" - isn't it easier to say 2001?) and the little jibe about her mom going to see an art exhibit in Russia instead of coming to her daughter's high school graduation ...

At some point i lost faith in this writer. I'm sure there's a lot of truth in this book, but sorting it out is too much of a chore. She ultimately comes across as a wild-eyed conspiracy theorist. Again, I'm sure there's a lot of truth in here, but her knee-jerk distrust of government, money, "corporate America," Readers Digest - everything! - made me question assertions I'd bought into 100 pages earlier.

The Emperor of All Maladies covers much of the same subject matter, is balanced, and much (MUCH) better researched and footnoted. Also very well-written, from a purely literary standpoint. This book is not.

I can't "rate" a book I didn't read cover to cover. I'll give her credit for questioning the motivation of a lot of "commissions" "societies" and various 501(c)(3) orgs who weren't following their charter to the letter, but she could have done so much better. Lose the hyperbole, the outrage, the ad hominem arguments, and let me judge for myself. And do a better job of citing your sources.

Susan says

This is a thorough and well-researched history of research on cancer, written by a renowned epidemiologist. In particular, this is a history of the difficulty of studying the effects of the environment on the development of cancer. Partly, this is due to the fact that, in today's world, it is nearly impossible to analyze the effects of any one particular element in isolation from others. But it is also due (1) to the fact that the industries which produce possibly toxic substances, and profit from them, also to a large extent control access to the information needed to analyze their effects; and (2) to the unreasonable (and in fact, hypocritical) standards industry and courts require to establish proof of harm.

This is a dense but, on the whole, very readable book. I confess, however, that I finished the book feeling a little hopeless about the chances of living a toxic-free life!

Jean-marie Kauth says

Devra Davis's book was so devastating in its indictment of the chemical and tobacco industries that I had to take it in small bites, to prevent the bile of it overwhelming me: not Davis's bile, mind you, but the bitter pill of industrial and governmental complicity in the illness and deaths of millions. Of course, not everyone would take it so personally. The systematic refusal to acknowledge the real causes of the cancer epidemic cost me my darling Katherine. It was like reading the detailed confessions and court transcripts of her murderers. It was that, in fact. To say that these industries do not have my daughter's blood on their hands, and the blood of uncounted innocents, would be merely specious.

With experience as Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary for Health in the Department of Health and Human Services and authorship of nearly 200 books and articles, only a few people would have been as well poised as Davis to reveal the truth of this War on Cancer: that from the beginning, even those supposedly on our side, like the American Cancer Society and the National Cancer Institute, were complicit in the toxic war waged against us by the chemical and tobacco industries. Davis describes the systematic cultivation of a climate of doubt about scientific evidence, and a terrible hardening of assumptions about the evidence required to show that a chemical is harmful and subject to ban. She was there for much of the assault on public safety: "I watched the maturing of the science of doubt promotion – the concerted and well-funded

effort to identify, magnify and exaggerate doubts about what we could say that we know as a way of delaying actions to change the way the world operates” (15-16). The callousness with which companies whose chemicals were implicated delayed protections by calling for more research is stunning: “From the very first reports that vinyl chloride could dissolve the finger bones of workers, cause cancer in animals and deform babies, the industry had a simple response: more research is needed. Let’s keep studying whether there really is a problem, while releasing enough information that people would feel assured the problem if it exists is trivial” (393).

This is a war in which the casualties have been legion: “I believe that if we had acted on what has long been known about the industrial and environmental causes of cancer when this war first began, at least a million and a half lives could have been spared, a huge casualty rate that those who have managed the war on cancer must answer for. This book explains how I have come to that reckoning” (22). Davis supports her claims, uncovering damning evidence from many different quarters. In some cases, she brought forth personal communications, in others, documents that show that scientists knew virtually everything about the link between cancer and smoking, radiation, and workplace exposures by 1938. But these findings did not see the light of day because of the many tobacco and chemical company executives in places of power, on the board of the American Cancer Society, for instance. Instead, all energies in the War on Cancer were diverted to treating the cases created by those industries. Davis describes the legal toxic onslaught against people everywhere in the United States, in chapters ranging from cigarettes to chemicals to cell phones.

Davis shows how all of us face a barrage of toxic exposures from a variety of sources, most of which we do not even think about. And not thinking about it is definitely part of the problem:

It is not simply that cancer is one of the diseases that afflicts the survivors of these polluted towns or those along China’s poisoned rivers in disproportionate numbers. What afflicts them more is that the very place they lived in – the air they breathed, the ground they walked on – was toxic. The real failure of the Superfund law, like the failure of the war on cancer, has only a little to do with bloated bureaucracies or scheming lobbyists or unfortunate yokels with trucks full of the wrong stuff. Ultimately, it’s a failure to look clearly at what’s right in front of our faces.

Davis’s book may be hard to stomach – because it looks at what’s right in front of our faces – but the effort is salutary, honest, and important to changing the world for the better. Her book is a call for action. She is frank about the barriers to truth-telling. She says in an afterward that her “own freedom to talk about avoidable cancer risks may suffer as well.” She names researchers who were fired or threatened with firing because their research impugned the chemical industry. Research funds were routinely withdrawn when results did not correspond with industry desires. Davis reveals how the secret war she refers to in her title was never as secret as she had thought: “Tobacco money paid for some of the best science in the world, yielding thousands of papers and years of delays in dealing with this important cause of poor health” (478). It is counter-intuitive but true that more science in this case resulted in worse health, not better, because of these deliberate, self-interested delays.

Despite the brutality of the subject matter, *Secret History* is very readable, and no doubt for someone with less at stake in the matter, would seem like a well-written mystery novel, or a true crime narration, more like. On the other hand, how many of us have less at stake in the causes of cancer when half of all men and a third of all women will develop the disease in their lifetimes? This is not the kind of book to bore readers, despite informing them and arming them against the duplicitous techniques of our industrial overlords. I recommend it above any other book I have read recently. Davis’s work may give more people the courage to stand up and say that it is not too much to ask that evil corporations – and I’m sorry, but no other word is sufficient – be prevented from polluting our bodies without our knowledge or permission. It is not too much to ask.

Environmental Injustice is too pale a term when one person is indirectly and legally killing another, in our case, a beloved child. Other individuals' economic interests should not come at the expense of dead loved ones, or our own diseased bodies. A clean environment should be a human right – in the United States and everywhere.

Reference

Davis, D. (2009). The secret history of the war on cancer. New York: Basic Books.

For more information, visit my blog at <http://poisoningourchildren.wordpress...>

Carol Hunter says

Having recently finished a very long series of treatment for breast cancer I found this book riveting. Devra Davis is a renowned expert in the field of environmental oncology. She makes a very strong case that we have been fighting the wrong battle because we have targeted the disease rather dealing with cancer's causes, including the environment. Our leaders of industry have worked hard to avoid dealing with the cancer-causing materials they have generated. The emphasis has been on making the disease less deadly, but not preventing it.

As I went through my very costly treatment I often wondered how the cancer industry would survive if cancer were actually prevented.

This is a deeply disturbing book filled with gut-wrenching information. The author does make it very readable and I found the various personalities fascinating. The 400+ pages make it impossible to summarize all the information, but for your families health, I urge you to read this book.

Christina says

This book is *important*. While not as pleasant and easy-going of an important read as a book like the Omnivore's Dilemma, it is clear, impeccably researched, and excruciatingly relevant. I don't even know what to say here, because every chapter could inspire pages of reactions. I wish this review could include a picture of how many page corners I dog-eared, for starters -- just about every page contains either clarification/validation of something I suspected already or a tidbit that makes me stop and think, "SERIOUSLY??? Why does nobody know this?????"

This book took me a while to get through, simply because there's so much in it. Sometimes, despite her best intentions, Davis got a bit too academic and my eyes began to glaze over. But as you read it's apparent that Davis considered this the book she needed to write, not just something to publish. Good thing, too, because it's the book I needed to read and this time in my life. Part of me wants to dismiss some of her claims as sensationalized (which I sure many in industry and politics will do), but most of what she says is so painful to read that I know it's wishful thinking to think it's anything other than wholeheartedly accurate.

I'm glad this book exists. I also wish the same book existed, but in some sort of engaging multimedia presentation so that the average person/doctor/pharmaceutical lobbyist would actually pay attention -- because it's so obvious that this stuff MATTERS but the majority of people who need this book won't read it. Sigh.

I have way more to say, but I don't want to bore you, so just ask me if you're interested. :) But at any rate, don't drink diet soft drinks, don't smoke, and don't get willy-nilly CT scans just for fun.
