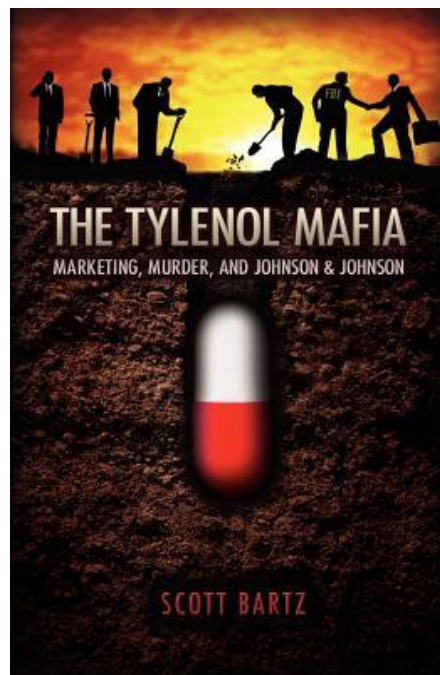




The Tylenol Mafia: Marketing, Murder, and Johnson & Johnson

Scott Bartz

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On September 29, 1982, seven people in Chicago died after taking Extra Strength Tylenol capsules laced with cyanide. Officials have long cited the scarcity of physical evidence and apparent lack of motive to explain why they never solved the Tylenol murders. However, new revelations and information not previously disclosed tell a very different story of a crime that should have been solved.

In a story both fascinating and dramatic in its warnings, The Tylenol Mafia rips away the facade of an investigation that J&J CEO James Burke labeled "A demonstration without parallel of government and business working with the news media to help protect the public." This gripping, meticulously documented expose' unearths the troubling details of an investigation corrupted by well-connected corporate executives and politically motivated government officials who simply buried the truth inside a shadow legal system inaccessible to everyday Americans.

The Tylenol Mafia: Marketing, Murder, and Johnson & Johnson Details

Date : Published April 10th 2012 by New Light Publishing (first published September 23rd 2011)
ISBN :
Author : Scott Bartz
Format : Kindle Edition 550 pages
Genre : Nonfiction, Crime, True Crime

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From Reader Review The Tylenol Mafia: Marketing, Murder, and Johnson & Johnson for online ebook

Judy says

An unbelievable story about the cover-up of the 1982 and 1986 Tylenol murders. Although quite a long book, the detail and insight of the author into the corporate credo of J&J is fascinating. The connections of all the company management and ties to Chicago upbringing seems more than coincidental. The blatant misleading of the FBI is shocking. I will now be more aware and careful of any OTC drug I purchase. Very sad that FBI informants were paid off more than the victims families received in legal action against J&J.

Ryan says

Disturbing, proof regulations are needed. Not all companies will do the right thing.

Victoriavanc says

Others have said anything I would say...too long, too much repetition of information, too much superfluous detail about individuals' lives or presumed involvement in the issues. I wanted to have the facts and learn what had been proven and what had not. Took forever to get to the end...and still not be sure.

Cathy says

could not finish this book. Sad to say. Has a lot of detail and dates and names. I do not usually not complete a book. It was upsetting to find out how much corruption was and still is involved in big corporations and government.

Michael Johnson says

I was amazed at the scope of detail and amount of research, but I ended up quitting the book because I felt it was beginning to loop back upon itself. I found myself skipping more and more detail as I progressed. Although there is a lot of information, I was disappointed with the amount of speculation regarding the actions of Johnson and Johnson in this incident. While I was convinced that the author made a fairly compelling case to where I was convinced that Johnson and Johnson is not totally pure, there seems to be little actionable evidence that still exists. A much shorter version, would have been much more compelling.

Chris says

Interesting book, but it could easily have been half the length. The amount of needless repetition, sometimes

even within the same paragraph, borders on the absurd.

Grace says

Scott Bartz wrote this book because he wanted people to know the whole story of the Tylenol murders, I feel that he had too much that didn't need to be there. It gave me a whole lot of knowledge, but most would not be vital to the reading experience.

Mike says

The author makes an interesting case that Johnson & Johnson covered up evidence in the Tylenol murders to protect their profits and hide tax fraud. That being said the author's arguments could have been better organized and presented. His scattered approach makes the story confusing and gives the impression he is grasping at straws. Like similar conspiracy based books it relies on innuendo and supposition. The author makes the assumption that if people attend the same school or from the same town they are willing to engage in a criminal conspiracy. The author's credibility is also hurt by the fact he is a former employee who was fired. I think something shady going on but I doubt the scale of the allegations.

Karen says

slow going since there was so much to keep track of- names, corporate information etc. but a sobering read . Not for everyone, but I found it quite interesting.

Brittany Kubes says

A 600+ page book on the Tylenol murders of 1982 in the Chicagoland area. This book caught my eye because I frequently hear people discussing how those murders changed the U.S. – which always seemed extreme. After reading this, I'm prone to agree. In 1982, 7 Chicago-area residents died after consuming Tylenol capsules laced with cyanide. No one was ever convicted for the murders. It was generally assumed that a madman had gone to various stores and placed the capsules in the shelved bottles. Author Scott Bartz believes that the tampering occurred BEFORE capsules were shipped to local retailers – i.e. in Johnson & Johnson distribution channels – and wants the world to know. Bartz believes the lethal mix of big business (Johnson & Johnson) + big government (FDA and FBI), and the cronyism in between, resulted in a large cover-up.

It's hard to overlook the notion that Bartz may have personal vendetta (making him bias) against J&J – he worked there and eventually got fired from there. His goal seemed to be to take down J&J and James Burke, the J&J CEO who created the “gold standard” for crisis management in big companies. I'm nonetheless siding with the author in that I think it's absurd J&J wasn't splayed by the murders...but 1) it's undeniable that J&J/James Burke were geniuses! J&J's product was killing people in October 1982, but mere months later, the company was thriving once again because their marketing skills were brilliant: they answered calls diligently from all press/individuals; promoted a “terrorist in the retail stores” theory that they were trying to protect America from; gave endless discounts to doctors and coupons to consumers; and last but far from

least, created three layers of tamper-resistant packaging for pill bottles (“Who will protect America if we don’t?”). And 2) I think it was just this perfect storm of FDA indifference, prosecutorial slips, and FBI neglect, in addition to superior J&J marketing skills, that created this unsolved mystery. Maybe it’s idealism (which would be weird...), but I’m not convinced that all of those entities worked together to purposely suffocate this investigation – the FDA is lazy and prosecutors are overreaching. J&J is the only player with a motive to suppress the investigation.

While the perp remained at large, many more victims than just the initial 7 resulted. More cyanide deaths occurred EVEN after “tamper-proof” bottles were created, which goes toward Bartz’s theory that the cyanide was not inserted at retail stores but rather earlier in the distribution process. Also, James Lewis was certainly a victim – Lewis was convicted in 1983 of writing an extortion letter to J&J referencing the Tylenol murders. It was proved he did not commit the murders, but just exploited the crime, and spent 12 years in jail. Thereafter, Lewis was continually messed with by investigators – he spent a couple years in jail during a pending rape trial for which the victim continually said Lewis did not do, and he was stalked by undercovers in 2009 until his house was eventually raided by the FBI. In 2010, Lewis and his wife provided DNA samples at the request of investigators. No charges have ever been brought.

The Tylenol murders really have changed America. Not only has a “gold standard” for crisis control been created by J&J, an ever-buoyant company, but in 1982 people lost innocence when they realized that there are crazy people in the world who can kill us arbitrarily if they want to, “is anyone safe?!” etc. This book was an interesting exposé on the befuddled murders, and the details were quite all-encompassing (see author’s website for even MORE details...: <http://americanfraud.com/default.aspx>). However, these facts remain & nag at me: whether it was a madman that poisoned capsules in a retail store, or in the distribution chain, 1) it was still a madman & 2) there’s no evidence J&J as a corporate body was involved in the poisoning...so what is the net effect of obsessing over the idea that the poisoning occurred in distribution channels and not retail stores? OK, maybe J&J would have paid out a little more money to each of the victims’ families (because they would be more legally liable if one of their employees perpetuated poisons)...and maybe J&J would have died, and a comparable company selling pharm products would inevitably have replaced it...and ?

Deestarr says

This was a very interesting book about the Tylenol poisonings that occurred during the early 1980s and the efforts of the victims families to bring the Tylenol Killer to justice as well as the efforts of the federal government and the pharmaceutical industry to block the investigation. While the research was well done, and the author was well informed about the events there are several issues that I have with this book. First, the formatting. The typeface is not a standard book typeface such as, Garamond and the author switches back and forth in font size with little reason to do so. Second, there are significant issues with the grammar and spelling this this text. While I would recommend this book to someone interested in the case you just need to be informed that there are significant flaws with the formatting.

B. Barron says

Interesting bits and pieces, but that is all they are – bits and pieces that add up to nothing. A nothing from a very, very disgruntled ex employee. It is an obvious hatchet job.

Julie says

I've been at this one for awhile. This book is really interesting. The author has done research, and knows a great deal about J&J employees, distribution centers, attorneys, judges, politicians, suspects, victims etc. However, this is a self published book and as far as I know there was no editing. So, I started a new chapter thinking I had already read it, and I had read parts of it in previous chapters, and more than once at times. I don't think we should take one source as gospel truth, and I don't know how the author got his information, but it read like a Oliver Stone JFK conspiracy theory at times. Sometimes, he was all over the place. Half of the book deals with the cover up, the last half has extensive notes. But, it could have been shorted considerably if the author hadn't repeated himself as often. There was just so much information and it needed to be organized better. The story was chilling, and I have no doubt J&J was more concerned with saving their company than in finding out who the killer was. I also don't doubt that law enforcement and attorneys wished to sweep information under the carpet as well, and that they picked out who they thought they could build a case against and twisted the evidence to fit. That happens all the time. I hope a good editor takes this book on, and re-releases it. It certainly give you food for thought.

Rmarcassoli says

ugh, it was an effort to finish. The book could have been half the size and still not have lost any details.

ERIN SCHMIDT says

The name "Johnson & Johnson" conjures up images of gentle, safe baby care products. What could be more wholesome? The public vaguely recalls that seven individuals died as a result of taking Tylenol capsules, a J&J product, laced with cyanide in late September 1982. Most Americans believe the heroic J&J company swept in to swiftly recall their products and protect the public from the shadowy "madman" behind the tamperings. No one was ever convicted of the crimes.

In fact, Bartz uncovers mounds of evidence that J&J, with the cooperation of Illinois' investigative body and the FBI, covered up evidence and obstructed justice. The company kept insisting that the products with tampered with either at the retail stores in which consumers bought them or by the "rack jobbers" who keep the pharmacy shelves stocked. Bartz's evidence suggests it's far more likely the perpetrator was a J&J employee, adding cyanide to the pain reliever at the factory level. More people may have died than the seven who made the national news in 1982; their deaths could easily have been mistaken for heart attacks and strokes.

Bartz suggests J&J has a poor record of rigorously testing its products for safety, a poor record of recalling its products in a timely fashion, and a corporate culture that values dollars over human lives, beginning with the Johnson brothers themselves.

This book is a true crime story, a legal thriller and a call to action all in one. It's infuriating what the corporate world is allowed to get away with, yet it's important that this information reach the general public. Read this book and share it with anyone who cares about the state of the American justice system.

The only reason I give the book four instead of five stars is that the writing style could have been cleaned up a little bit. There's a certain amount of repetition, and the impact of the repeated information could have been

bigger if it appeared in only one, carefully chosen place. Other than this minor flaw, it's a compelling read.
