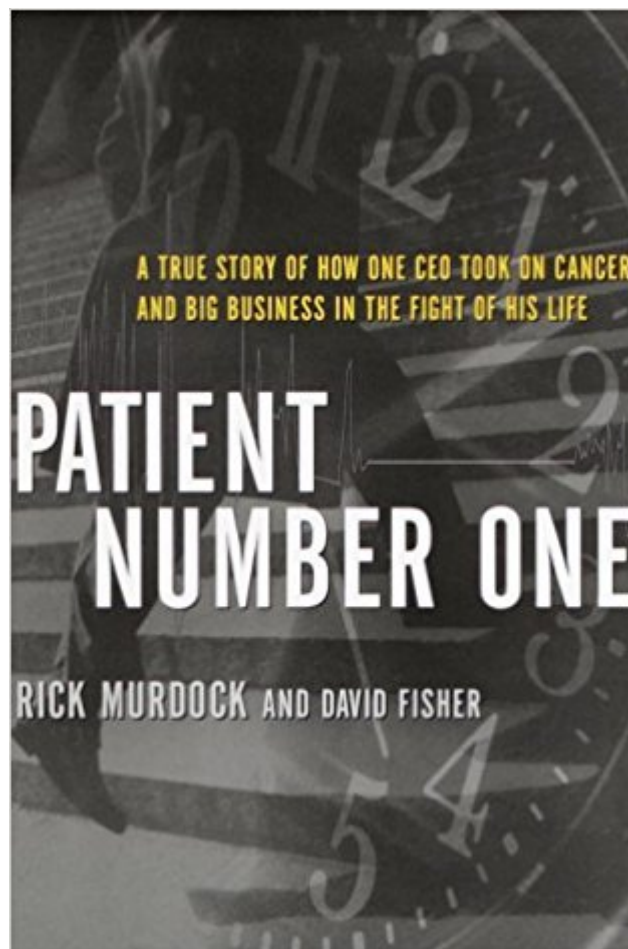




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Patient Number One: A True Story Of How One CEO Took On Cancer And Big Business In The Fight Of His Life



Synopsis

How many victims of cancer have thought, "If only I could order up a cure"? Rick Murdock could. In an extraordinary book that proves that truth can be stranger than fiction, Rick Murdock tells the dramatic story of his fight against a deadly lymphoma that could only be treated with technology developed by his own biotech company, and the equally harrowing battle for the survival of his company in a bruising legal dispute with a multibillion-dollar medical products giant. Rick Murdock was forty-four years old when he was named CEO of CellPro, a thriving biotech company in Seattle that was reaping the benefits of the biotech boom in the late 1980s and early '90s. Wall Street money fueled the flame of cutting-edge research at start-up companies like CellPro, where dedicated scientists were researching treatments that showed great promise in the fight against cancer and other diseases. But then Rick found a lump in his neck, evidence of the acute mantle cell lymphoma raging through his system. This rare form of cancer had no cure: Without a miracle, Rick would die. At CellPro, Rick found his miracle workers. In a stunning twist of fate, Rick's staff was experimenting with a radical new treatment for advanced lymphomas, though the scientists were months, if not years, away from success. Knowing they were their boss's last hope, these researchers went to work on the experiment that could save Rick's life. If they were successful, Rick would become "patient number one," the guinea pig for a technology that had never been used on humans. The thrilling race against time to save Rick's life is only part of this remarkable story. For while Rick was fighting for his own life, he was also battling a medical products behemoth named Baxter Healthcare and archaic patent laws that threatened CellPro. If CellPro was put out of business, the promising therapies it had been developing for victims of breast cancer, leukemia, lymphoma, and other deadly cancers could disappear. Patient Number One shares the intriguing story of how entrepreneurs and scientists came together to form CellPro, painting a vivid picture of how researchers work tirelessly to come up with new and better treatments for disease, while their financiers play a high-stakes financial game to make money from these medical endeavors. However, in the tradition of books like *A Civil Action*, Patient Number One is also an illuminating, often scathing look at how medical research is conducted in America today as the bottom line can get in the way of saving lives. Lawyers, politicians, researchers, executives, and investors all want a piece of the biotech pie and will stop at nothing to preserve their special interests, even if it means keeping life-saving treatments from the people who need them. From tense courtroom scenes between the Goliath-like Baxter and tiny CellPro to anxious moments in the laboratory with Rick's staff and Rick's own agonizing cancer treatments, Patient Number One takes readers into the fascinating, frustrating world of medical research and how it directly affects us all.

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Customer Reviews

Cancer is a terrorist, driving us mad with feelings of hopelessness and despair. One man, faced with lymphatic cancer and a poor prognosis, had the unique opportunity to influence not just the course of his treatment, but the research guiding that treatment. Patient Number One tells the story of Rick Murdock, former CEO of CellPro, a Seattle biotech company specializing in cell separation--as it would happen, a vital component of his treatment and eventual cure. Written by Murdock and David Fisher, the book is both an intensely personal look at the day-to-day hardships of living with cancer and a thrilling legal story. While he was battling his disease, Murdock had to fight the giant Baxter medical-products corporation over an application of patent law that would have killed CellPro just as surely as cancer has killed so many people over the years. As the struggle for his company becomes intertwined with his fight for life, every moment takes on heightened significance; the simplest acts, like driving to the doctor with his wife and reading research reports at work, become crucial, even life-giving. Filled with unique insights into living with cancer and the dawn of the biotech era, Patient Number One is a powerful record of its time. --Rob Lightner

In 1996, Murdock used an experimental procedure--which involved removing stem cells from his bone marrow, cleaning them with chemotherapy and radiation and then reintroducing the cleansed cells back into the marrow--to treat his advanced lymphoma. What made his case so unusual was that, at the time, he was CEO of CellPro, a Seattle-based biotechnology company experimenting

with the very procedure, separating cancer cells from stem cells, needed to save his life. With the assistance of Fisher (coauthor with George Burns of *All My Best Friends*), Murdock dramatically describes how a team of CellPro scientists raced frantically to finish what they called "the Rick Project"--although the researchers calculated they were nine months away from refining their cell separation device, they were able to perfect it in just eight weeks. As Murdock began using these newly developed technologies to fight for his life, a giant multinational corporation was suing CellPro for patent infringement. Although a jury had unanimously sided with CellPro, the judge overturned the verdict, finding CellPro guilty. As a result, shortly after Murdock finished his treatment, CellPro was effectively out of business--and the device that saved his life was no longer available. Explaining both his own experiences and the complex world of biotech patents and politics, Murdock, now CEO of a medical-device company, makes a strong argument that progress in scientific research too often takes a backseat to business interests. (May) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Few of us know what it was like to have a fatal illness and have survived. And even fewer would have been the CEO of the company that created the device that saved our life! Rick Murdock is one of these rare people, and his story, in the first person, is fascinating. Equally fascinating to those of us who want to live a long life and depend upon medical science to let us do that, is the author's frustrating journey in attempting to make the technology that saved his life available to others. An eye opening read!

I read this book 16 years ago and I still recommend it to others and purchase it for others!

Fabulous book, even more compelling because I know the Patient.

Overall, *PATIENT NUMBER ONE* is a compelling, dramatic true story that is fast-paced and socially relevant. Though story's most intense moments are played out over laboratory beakers and in the pages of patent infringement law--it's a fascinating read. The subject matter is on par with films like *THE INSIDER*, bringing to light some very ugly but very timely truths about big business and our legal system. The premise-- that a CEO whose life was saved by the very technology his company invented, must battle big business to save that same company- is a true David vs. Goliath story, but one with a bittersweet ending. The people in the story are very compelling, mostly because of the hardships they face and overcome, rather than because of their uniqueness or likability. For

example, the protagonist Richard is a rather bland corporate executive, and one who was lucky enough to be in exactly the right place when cancer struck. I empathize with him only because of the complete unfair tactics that are waged against him, not because I necessarily identify with a CEO of a tech firm. The most interesting characters are the scientists at CellPro in charge of saving their boss' life. This task and its pressures are the most riveting aspects of the book, and make for a brilliant read.

I have a Friend who just went through this process at John Hopkins. The results at this time are excellent and the procedures are almost exactly what the Author went through. I would recommend this book as a tool for all Patients that are diagnosed with this form of Cancer as a Ray of Hope for their peace of mind. The only downside is the exposing of how our Judicial System treats the Treatment of a serious illness as another point of Law. They should be ashamed and the Judge should be also for overturning a Jury verdict. They wonder why people have no respect for the Law and Jury Trials.

Even the strong hearter should be ready for an emotional tug when reading this book. the incredible story of the CEO, Rick Murdock, shows that no one can escape cancer but we can defeat it. At first I thought this would be a book that was basically scientific and confusing but I as pleasantly surprised. It is a fast and wonderful read!

I have Mantle Cell Lymphoma. There is no cure. I don't want people to stop fighting. I believe that there is a danger sent here in that many people like myself will die before we are afforded the same opportunity. What is Mr. Murdoch doing with the proceeds from this book? If this book was written for noble reasons than donate all the money for this story as to not come across like an elitist who was given a chance to live that others won't. There are many inspiring tales of survival - for those of us that are sick - I certainly don't want to be reminded that he was privileged. I feel like this was a bit sensationalist.

Although the ghost writer of this tale did yeoman's work, I was overwhelmed on every page by what was between the lines: Rick Murdock would have died from this disease had he not been a rich and powerful CEO of a company that specialized in this treatment area. The average person, that is to say all patients who do not fall into the top 10 percent of wage earners in this country, are subjected to health care that has become increasingly rationed. Mr. Murdock ought to thank his lucky stars

and donate the proceeds from his (the ghost writer's) book to hospice.

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