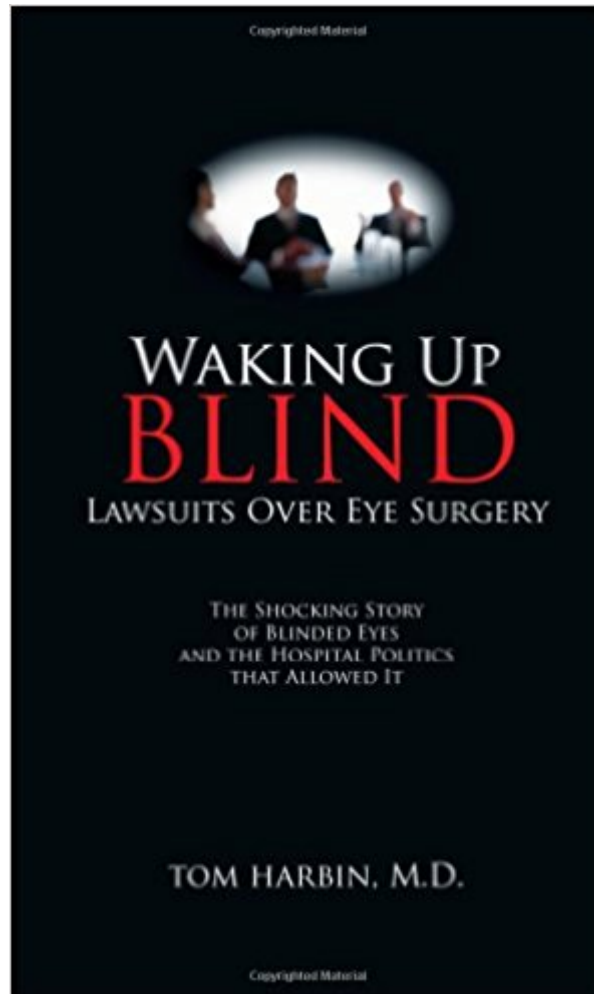




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Waking Up Blind - Lawsuits Over Eye Surgery



Synopsis

Imagine trusting a doctor--with the best reputation in the state--to do surgery on your eyes. Now imagine the worst of outcomes. Blindness in an eye that you learn, in fact, never needed surgery. And the medical center where you were treated is ignoring the problem. *Waking Up Blind* is the story of how an eye surgeon became the cause of an array of medical problems for his patients. It is also the story of how one of the nation's premier medical centers tried to conceal the growing scandal. The faculty who exposed the problems were punished. Official committees and the university leaders minimized the misconduct. Slowly, lawsuits and publicity brought some to light in bits and pieces. With the use of court documents, transcripts of tape-recorded conversations, interviews, and personal observation, Dr. Tom Harbin presents this case from the very beginning, uncovering all levels of wrongdoing and secrecy. *Waking Up Blind* will shock the reader with its candid exploration of the dark side of medicine.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"A compelling story of medical tragedy." [Kirkus Reviews](#)
Waking Up Blind: Lawsuits over Eye Surgery is a riveting, true story that reads like a novel. While my novels deal with fictional medical disasters, Harbin spins a devastating, real-life account that will make the reader forever wary of the charming, super doctor. --Robin Cook, author of *Coma* and *Outbreak*
Waking Up Blind is an astonishing book of great courage and an even greater passion for seeking--and telling--the truth."

--Pat Conroy, author of *The Prince of Tides* "This frightening story is the must-read book of the year. I simply could not put it down, then it stayed with me long after I had turned the last page."

--Cassandra King, author of *The Sunday Wife* *Waking Up Blind* is an astonishing book of great courage and an even greater passion for seeking--and telling--the truth. --Pat Conroy, author of *The Prince of Tides* This frightening story is the must-read book of the year. I simply could not put it down, then it stayed with me long after I had turned the last page. --Cassandra King, author of *The Sunday Wife* *Waking Up Blind* is an astonishing book of great courage and an even greater passion for seeking--and telling--the truth. --Pat Conroy, author of *The Prince of Tides* This frightening story is the must-read book of the year. I simply could not put it down, then it stayed with me long after I had turned the last page. --Cassandra King, author of *The Sunday Wife*

Dr. Tom Harbin received his M.D. from Cornell University and trained in ophthalmology at the Wilmer Institute of Johns Hopkins. He has been practicing ophthalmology with a specialty in glaucoma for over thirty years and is a Clinical Professor Emeritus at Emory University. *Waking Up Blind: Lawsuits over Eye Surgery* is his first book. His second book, *The Business Side of Medicine...What Medical Schools Don't Teach You*, was published in 2013. Dr. Harbin resides with his wife in Atlanta, Ga.

Waking up Blind is a riveting suspenseful TRUE story about how one of the world's top ophthalmologists spiraled out of control in his attempt to become the most prestigious, wealthy, and powerful physician in the world. The procedures and activities that took place at the Emory Eye Clinic during the mid to late 1980s will utterly shock you. --Dr. Tom Harbin a highly respected Cornell trained ophthalmologist details the twisting, turning, tale of lies, cover-ups, deceit, and deception that haunt Emory's past. Left unchecked, you will learn how one corrupt individual used a "win at all cost strategy" to build the empire that is Emory today. Overall, leadership was to blame, patients received unnecessary eye surgeries, good-hearted Emory physicians were blackmailed, and rewards were distributed to those that kept quiet. From the very beginning of the book you will be drawn in by the intensely vivid scenes that are portrayed. Dr. Harbin, provides amazing detail and insight into what it was like to work at Emory eye clinic during this time. This book is a must read for anyone working in a medical office, hospital, or anyone who plans to work in healthcare. If you seek treatment in the American healthcare system you will also greatly benefit from reading this book. Dr. Harbin provides real life proof of why patients need to use common sense and become vested stakeholders in their

own health and the health of their loved ones. After all the details are set Dr. Harbin takes you on a journey as he moves through the sequence of events that took place as Emory tried to settle their disputes in house. The events shocking, appalling, and downright wrong will have you at the edge of your seat cheering for the good guys. Your opinion will sway back and forth as you listen to the eloquent, compelling words spoken, as Emory's top ophthalmologist tries to defend his actions during several ethics committee hearings. --Ultimately you will realize the bad guy won in this story. The heroes-- were cast to the street and reprimanded. Waking up Blind will take you on an adventure that you will never forget. I read Dr. Harbin's book for a class assignment and I am very glad that Dr. Harbin used his time to write this book. Thank you for giving younger generations a valuable tool to make the world a better place. It will be remembered.

This is an amazing story that is a must read for both healthcare professionals and patients alike. As a physician I know all too well that abuse of power can be a lethal mix in the quality care of patients. Unfortunately mistakes are a part of healthcare. However the stunning abuse of power that went unchecked with such an obvious physician out of control. Thank you Dr Harbin for presenting this story in such a succinct and elegant way. This should be a required reading for everyone taking care of patients as well as medical students. The lay person I think might have more difficulty following the sequence of events primarily because most would find it hard to believe physicians would act like many in the book. However after reading this book I expect patients will be better able to protect themselves. Great read!

I picked up Dr. Harbin's book and found myself putting it down 8 hours later, minus a night of sleep. Although the events related in the novel should be terrifying to the average reader, relating them with an appropriate level of detail and integrity is an enormous challenge for the author. I lived through the aftermath of some of these events and can even remember a patient who traveled up from Atlanta to Baltimore for eye surgery saying that she made the trip to ensure that the proper eye would be operated on. Harbin sifted through weeks of testimony, transcript, and legal proceedings but managed to maintain a breathtaking pace and timing throughout. Although the events portrayed are monstrous and may induce a sense of outrage in the reader, Harbin is careful to be an objective relator. The result is a tragedy of Shakespearean proportions. Nobody comes out unscathed. Not the perpetrators, not the whistleblowers, and certainly not the patients who were harmed. Although the events described occurred 25 years ago, human nature being what it is, we must continually ask

ourselves whether we have adequate safeguards in place to prevent recurrence. Clearly, patient safety has become a priority at every major medical center. Extensive procedures have been instituted nationwide to prevent wrong eye (along with wrong-leg, wrong-hand, etc. surgery). The precipitating event of this book was not an isolated accident in its day, nor was it limited to Emory, as National Institute of Medicine Studies have shown. Not only are avoidable medical errors less likely today, Universities have grown far less tolerant of potentially fraudulent billing practices, as a result of huge public settlements paid by major teaching hospitals to reimburse the Medicare program for past practices. Lastly, there is substantially more protection for those whose ethics compel them to question potentially inappropriate and abusive practices, along with an established investigative structure that is less likely to whitewash an allegation. What hasn't changed is the human capacity for evil, especially when motivated by greed. It plays out in our headlines every day. We are surrounded by it in our financial dealings. We see it play out in the legal profession, within religious institutions, and we expect it in politics. Perhaps what is most remarkable about Harbin's book is that we find it shocking when ordinary, pedestrian greed and evil surfaces within an academic medical institution. It is a remarkable tribute to medicine that society is surprised when human nature at its worst invades the medical citadel, while we have long-since ceased to be surprised when it invaded the corporate boardroom, the city council, the federal government, or even the local house of worship. At some level, it must be a tribute to the medical profession that the events related are exceptional to the point where they are compelling and worth reading about 25 years later.

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