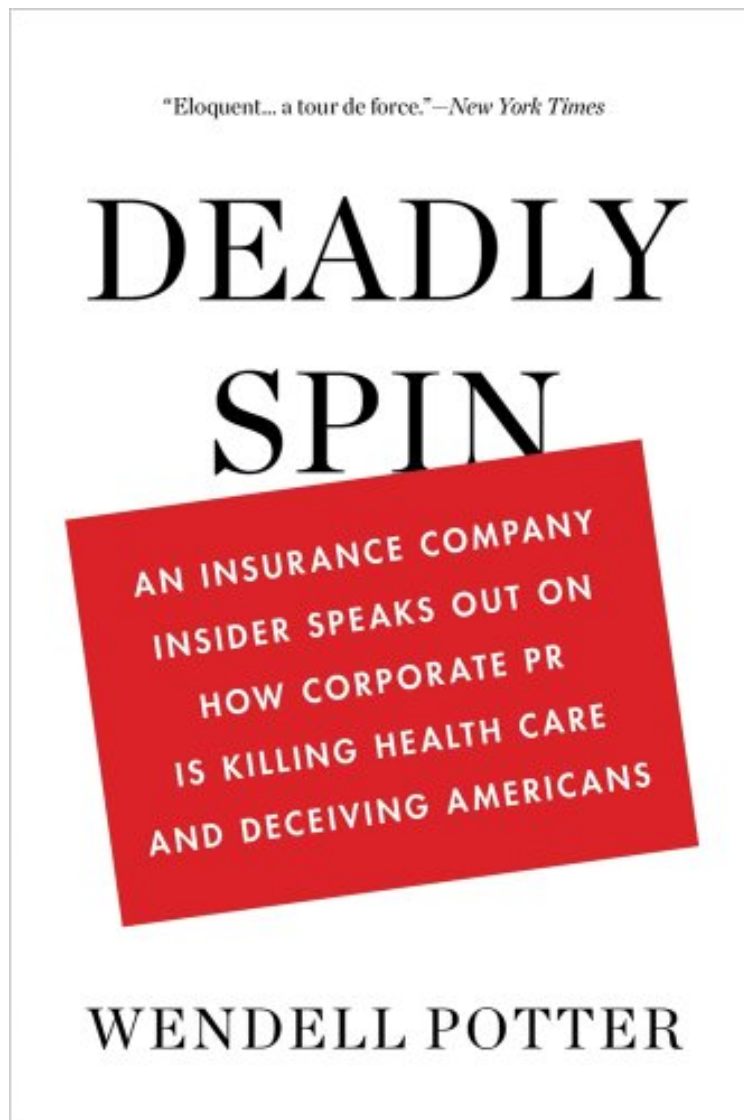


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## **Deadly Spin: An Insurance Company Insider Speaks Out on How Corporate PR Is Killing Health Care and Deceiving Americans**

*Wendell Potter*

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**Wendell Potter : Deadly Spin: An Insurance Company Insider Speaks Out on How Corporate PR Is Killing Health Care and Deceiving Americans** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Deadly Spin: An Insurance Company Insider Speaks Out on How Corporate PR Is Killing Health Care and Deceiving Americans:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Excellent bookBy Christina R BjornstadEveryone should read this book. We are lulled into thinking insurance companies are benign and interested in "helping" us when we are hurt or sick. But they are really interested in profits above all, and not getting sued or being the target of bad publicity. Wendell Potter is a hero for putting himself and his knowledge of how the system really works out there for the public to understand. Insurance companies (and drug companies) are not all good or all bad, but they need to be supervised and regulated as much as possible. The price of their potential for harm is enormous. We need as many whistleblowers as we can find.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Please, please read this book!!By Fiddlin' DocI'm just finishing Potter's Deadly Spin. It is among the best books on the Health Insurance industry available, going into detail about the fact that health insurance companies DO NOT CARE about your health...only about making higher and higher profits to appease their Wall Street masters! The book is infuriating, clearly showing the collusion between certain Congress members and insurance company CEOs to ensure continued high campaign contributions and obscenely excessive salaries and bonuses for insurance company executives.Potter is a journalist with the ability to write clearly and concisely about a complicated field. This is a MUST READ book if you are at all concerned about the state of American health care. There's a GOOD reason that the US is the only industrialized nation without government supported and operated medical care for its citizens. The reason is GIGANTIC PROFIT. Potter's background as a former PR executive for CIGNA and other larger insurers helps him rip back the covers from the immoral, deceitful and non-humanitarian actions of health care insurance companies. And when you hear your favorite Rethuglican talk about "adjustments" to Medicare and Social Security, be SURE that it's a ploy to turn a profit for someone from involvement in these two essential programs. Please, please read this book! Your life may depend on it!

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. ForgivenBy Edwin C. PauzerSpin. It means to lie, to misdirect, misinform, mislead, embellish, or distract. That's how the author saw public relations--to "be obscure clearly," to create the illusion that the corporate goals and public needs don't collide but coincide. Deadly spin is what the public relations of major healthcare insurance companies have done to the public, robbing them of benefits, coverage, treatment, and in some cases even robbing them of life while pretending that the interests and those of their policyholders were the same.How do they do it? It was played out in 2009 which provided a textbook example of the healthcare industry in action. While healthcare executives were pledging their support for President Obama's program to create a single payer, universal healthcare program, they hired a top public relations firm to sabotage the administration's efforts. This would include creating front organizations that appeared to be concerned about the health of the public, organizations armed with bogus studies on the limitations of universal healthcare, and how much more it would cost with limited services e.g. a bureaucrat is going to decide if grandma lives.Another part of the front group is a grassroots effort to make it look like there is a popular uprising against healthcare reform. Front groups hire troublemakers to disrupt town hall meetings rather than participate in them. They bus them to the site, show them where to stand and when to interrupt so they can have the greatest impact. It's all part of the PR.Hand-in-hand with these efforts is to seek legislation to thwart any effort at universal coverage. The tactics included using fear, fear of losing jobs, a decline in healthcare, or having to wait for urgent medical attention, and so on. Another tactic is "glittering generalities." These generalities are appeals to "patriotism," the "American way of life," or "democracy." Finally, testimonials of experts, approval of respected organizations, and pretending to be Washington outsiders (even while they are lobbying hard to influence representatives to get out your message), are some more of the tactics used by successful PR firms whose websites don't advertise their list of clients.Representatives also came out by the dozen during the debate. Zach Wamp, from Tennessee's third district got out a different message on MSNBC. His message was: 1) Democrats want to redistribute the wealth in the country, taking from people who had healthcare to give it to people who don't. 2) Some people cannot afford healthcare insurance, but some people can and don't bother. They end up in the emergency room on our dime. Illegal immigrants, the honorable representative added, were using our healthcare that was costing taxpayers millions. Potter knew everything that Wamp was saying came from a PR campaign because it was the PR campaign Wendell Potter created.The author takes apart each talking point of the healthcare industry's PR campaign, campaigns that have successfully played a president, representatives, and the public like a Stradivarius (the author's own metaphor). Ever since insurance companies have become profit-making organizations, they have only been beholden to the stockholder and not their policyholders, and the former only want to see the profit--not an increase in services. It has meant major insurance companies have robbed and cheated their policy holders while conning the public that they are only the victims who have had to raise premiums because of a lack of tort reform, burgeoning costs, and unnecessary treatments and therapies by doctors. What they haven't told you is that their premiums have increased hundreds fold above the rate of inflation, and that their profits have never been higher. Executives reap the benefits with huge salaries, and private jets that offer superb fare on china with gold inlay.By May of 2007, and by his own admission, Wendell Potter was spinning out of control. He had become a heavy consumer of beer because it helped him numb his conscience and prepare for another day of rationalizations and denial. After speaking with his family, he quit his high six-figure salary. He had lost the edge, the motivation to spin for CIGNA.This book represents his second decision after quitting his job. He could no longer sit on the sidelines and listen to PR spinmeisters and charmers lie to the public or before Congress. His testimony before Congress and this

book is his "mea maxima culpa," his attempt at redemption and ablutio. It was obvious from the Introduction that I was reading a book by an accomplished writer who started his career in journalism, not to mention that he had a story to tell, a burden to release, and he told it very well. I couldn't stop turning the pages. Also Recommended: Sicko (Special Edition) The author devotes a chapter to how the healthcare industry attempted to counter the movie's message and destroy its influence on the public. That is what makes this well worth seeing as the book is well worth reading. Blocking the Courthouse Door: How the Republican Party and Its Corporate Allies Are Taking Away Your Right to Sue

In June 2009, Wendell Potter made national headlines with his scorching testimony before the Senate panel on health care reform. This former senior VP of CIGNA explained how health insurers make promises they have no intention of keeping, how they flout regulations designed to protect consumers, and how they skew political debate with multibillion-dollar PR campaigns to mislead the press and public. Potter had walked away from a six-figure salary and two decades as an insurance executive because he could no longer abide the routine practices of an industry where the needs of sick and suffering Americans take a backseat to the bottom line--leading Michael Moore to call him "the Daniel Ellsberg of corporate America." In *Deadly Spin*, Potter takes readers behind the scenes to show how a huge chunk of our absurd health care spending actually bankrolls a propaganda campaign and lobbying effort focused on protecting one thing: profits. Potter shows how relentless PR assaults play an insidious role in our political process anywhere that corporate profits are at stake--from climate change to defense policy. *Deadly Spin* tells us why-- and how-- we must fight back. Praise for *Deadly Spin*: "The health insurance industry's worst nightmare."--Portfolio.com "A gripping indictment."--Kate Pickert, Time "Wendell Potter is a straight shooter--and he hits the bulls-eye here with an exposeacute; of corporate power that reveals why real health care reform didn't happen, can't happen, and won't happen until that power is contained."--Bill Moyers

From Publishers Weekly The disinformation campaigns with which health insurance companies hide misdeeds and manipulate public policy are laid bare in this searing j'accuse by one of their own. Potter, a former CIGNA public relations "spin-meister" whose whistle-blowing congressional testimony made a splash, takes us into the war rooms where he and his fellow flacks battled bad publicity--their counterattack against the documentary *Sicko* included employee training in how to weather a Michael Moore ambush--and fought to stymie health-care legislation. (He helped formulate the rhetoric of socialism and death panels that thundered from Republican podiums.) He exposes the PR pros' propaganda tricks--fake grass-roots organizations, bogus scientific studies--and recounts his shame-faced repentance. But he also trenchantly critiques the failure of America's for-profit health-insurance system: the underhanded methods insurers use to "dump the sick"; the skyrocketing premiums and deductibles that put health care beyond the reach of millions; the obscene salaries executives rake in while denying benefits to patients. These criticisms aren't new, but Potter's street cred and deep knowledge of the industry make his indictment unusually vivid and compelling. (Nov.) (c) Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Potter, 20-year public-relations executive for two of the largest for-profit health-insurance companies, presents an exposeacute; of America's health-care system, which he contends is dominated by corporate greed and human indifference. He ridicules the notion that America's free-market system can provide actual health care within a for-profit structure. Beginning in 1993, he was a leader in efforts to kill any reform legislation that threatened corporate profits and recounts unscrupulous efforts in 2007 that led him to leave his job. Potter, an investigative reporter before entering PR, explains why it is vital to understand the role of PR and "spin" in our lives, how to recognize it, and what to do about it. Although the author concludes that one day America will have excellent and equitable health care, it will take time and vigilance to force large, powerful corporations to be transparent in their activities. This whistle-blower perspective will heighten discussion and debate on the vital topic of health care in America. --Mary Whaley "You're the Daniel Ellsberg of corporate America. I mean, what that man did during Vietnam helped to end that war.... People should read this book. The whole book lays it right out there about how the health insurance companies had bamboozled this country and lied, just outright lied about things." Michael Moore to Wendell Potter on Countdown with Keith Olbermann "To get the country back on track, Potter exhorts consumers to adopt a healthy dose of skepticism toward corporate doublespeak. That's a sound prescription, one which no American can afford not to have filled." Joshua Kendall, The Boston Globe "A gripping indictment." Kate Pickert, Time "Potter engagingly weaves together industry secrets with his own moral struggle and transformation into a whistleblower who tried to beat back the spin that nearly killed Obamacare." Emily Loftis, Mother Jones "Deadly Spin is a must-read for all who want to learn more about what [the health reform law] is and what it is not. It is a handbook for social change." John Presta, New York Journal of Books "Potter's *Deadly Spin* is an eye-opening account of the backroom antics of industries that do harm. You won't look at issues the same way after you read this book. If you can understand how "spin" works, you will be able to understand the money and tactics used to distort the truth. And we need to know the power propaganda has on us all." Kari Burns, Chicago Life Magazine "What sets this book apart is that it is one of the few

volumes that examine ethical shortcomings of American public relationshellip;. this book is more than just one PR man's tell-all book about the insurance industry. It's a wake-up call.rdqquo; Gary Weiss, Portfolio.comldquo;An illuminating, up-to-the-minute testimonial sure to garner widespread attention and controversy.rdqquo; Kirkus s ldquo;[Potter] trenchantly critiques the failure of America's for-profit health-insurance systemhellip;. [and his] street cred and deep knowledge of the industry make his indictment unusually vivid and compelling.rdqquo; Publishers Weeklyldquo;[Potter] ridicules the notion that America's free-market system can provide actual health care within a for-profit structurehellip;. This whistle-blower perspective will heighten discussion and debate on the vital topic of health care in America.rdqquo; Mary Whaley, Booklistldquo;The book's as dramatic and suspenseful as a good novel.rdqquo; Linda Greene, The Bloomington Alternativeldquo;May be the ideal whistleblower.rdqquo; TimeIdquo;As one former insurance executive testified before Congress, insurance companies are not only encouraged to find reasons to drop the seriously ill; they are rewarded for it. All of this is in service of meeting what [Potter] called lsquo;Wall Street's relentless profit expectations.rdqquo; President Barack Obama, quoting Potter before Congress in September 2009ldquo;Wendell Potter is a straight shooter--and he hits the bulls-eye here with an expose of corporate power that reveals why real health care reform didn't happen, can't happen, and won't happen until that power is contained.rdqquo; Bill Moyersldquo;The recently passed health care bill did many good things, including make health insurance available to more Americans and restrain some of the most egregious practices of the health insurance industry. It also forced more people to become customers of that industry. What the bill did not do is reform the health care system. Wendell Potter explains why not, and what went wrong.rdqquo; Howard Deanldquo;Wendell Potter transformed the national debate over health care when he stood up and told the truth about the health insurance industry. By breaking the insurance industry's code of silence and explaining to his fellow Americans how health insurance companies put profits ahead of patient care, Wendell showed extraordinary courage. The compelling story of Wendell's conversion from a health care executive to an outspoken reform advocate is essential reading for anyone trying to understand the American health care system.rdqquo; Senator Jay Rockefeller of West Virginialdquo;Deadly Spin makes clear what reporters were--and are--up against as they try, and often fail, to make the complex pros and cons of health care reform clear to citizens, as big-money players misdirect and obfuscate. More important, it illuminates what citizens are upagainst as they try to figure it out.rdqquo; Mike Hoyt, Executive Editor, Columbia Journalism ldquo;The book's as dramatic and suspenseful as a good novel.rdqquo; Linda Greene, The Bloomington Alternativeldquo;Potter's Deadly Spin is an eye-opening account of the backroom antics of industries that do harm. You won't look at issues the same way after you read this book. If you can understand how lsquo;spin' works, you will be able to understand the money and tactics used to distort the truth. And we need to know the power propaganda has on us all.rdqquo; Kari Burns, Chicago Life Magazineldquo;The health insurance industry's worst nightmare.rdqquo; Portfolio.comldquo;Wendell Potter, former vice president of corporate communications with insurance giant CIGNA, now a fellow with the spin-busting Center for Media and Democracy, used media appearances and testimony before Congressional committees to expose the dark manipulations of fact that insurance firms use to preserve for-profit healthcare. Then he put it all on paper with a terrific bookrdquo; The Nationldquo;Eloquent... a tour de force.... Despite the damning revelations throughout his book, Mr. Potter's indictments of the industry he once served are far from heavy-handed; instead, they are suffused with the kind of transcendent empathy one finds in those who have undergone profound personal transformations.rdqquo; Dr. Pauline Chen, Well Blog, New York Times