

Book Reviews

The Truth About HIV

by Steven Ransom and Phillip Day
Credence Publ., Kent TN, UK, 2005
Paperback, 287 pages

Disagreements about the relationship, if any, between HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) are very similar to debates about the existence of God. Orthodox medicine, led by the USA Centers for Disease Control and its high priest, Dr. Robert Gallo, believe that HIV causes AIDS and those who doubt it are heretics.¹ Some revisionists, such as Dr. Luc Montagnier,² a key figure at the Pasteur Institute in Paris and the initial discoverer of HIV, however, no longer believe that the virus can cause AIDS without the assistance of a cofactor. This they think is probably some form of mycoplasma. Further down the spectrum are my own supporters³ who believe HIV causes AIDS only in people with depressed immune systems. This it does by selectively removing certain nutrients from the body, namely selenium, cysteine, tryptophan and glutamine. This process reduces the body's ability to produce the selenoenzyme, glutathione peroxidase, an antagonist of reverse transcriptase, the main enzyme that HIV needs for its replication. Even less orthodox are the views of Dr. Peter Duesberg⁴ and his supporters who argue that HIV is merely a harmless passenger virus and that AIDS is the result of destruction of the immune system by long-term cumulative use of intravenous, recreational and pharmaceutical drugs. They also believe that many of the AIDS patients in Africa and elsewhere in the developing world are merely suffering from malnutrition and associated ancient diseases such as tuberculosis. Finally, there are the AIDS atheists, members of the Perth Group⁵

like Eleni Papadopulos-Eleopulos, Valendar Turner and David Causer who do not believe in HIV and that, because it does not exist, neither does the AIDS pandemic.

The authors of *The Truth About HIV*, Steven Ransom and Phillip Day, are Perth Group supporters who have set out to prove that HIV and AIDS are simply convenient myths that will disappear once this reality is accepted. When first asked by Dr. Abram Hoffer to review this book, I refused, pointing out to him that I had been to Africa and seen dying AIDS patients. Furthermore, the nutritional treatment suggested in my book *What Really Causes AIDS* had reversed this syndrome in hundreds of HIV/AIDS victims. "Abram", I said, "asking me to review this book is like asking the Pope to review the Torah". Abram Hoffer is noted for his persistence and so, as can be seen from this review, I eventually relented. Nevertheless, please take into consideration that I believe the Perth Group to be wrong and that my discussion of their literature is bound to be biased.

The Truth About HIV is well written and documented. It begins by attempting to show that this virus does not exist. It does so largely by questioning the ethics of Dr. Robert Gallo, pointing out that he had previously been associated with the supposed HTLV1 (leukemia) virus that was later discredited. In addition, the much sought-after AIDS virus, initially termed HTLVIII (later renamed HIV) was apparently first discovered by Dr. Luc Montagnier's research group at the Pasteur Institute in Paris, that sent early samples to Gallo. There is serious doubt whether Gallo independently identified the virus, but nevertheless he took credit for its discovery at a Washington press conference soon after. If this historical review is correct, it, of course, does not disprove that HIV exists, merely that credit for its discovery was largely misplaced.

Ransom and Day also spend considerable time arguing that there is no photograph of HIV and that nobody has claimed the Perth Group's \$25,000 challenge to the research community to prove the existence of this virus. To receive this award seven criteria must be met. These range from electron micrographs of HIV particles to proof that they contain reverse transcriptase. Suffice it to say that Coor⁶ has reviewed the HIV/AIDS literature in detail, showing that all seven criteria have been met many times. Interestingly, the only person I am aware of who had attempted to claim this virusmyth.com prize is Dr. Peter Duesberg, the Berkeley retrovirologist who does not believe that HIV causes AIDS and would have a great deal to gain if the virus did not exist. So why is he so convinced that it does?

There is, of course, a great deal of other evidence that HIV, unfortunately, is amongst us. Numerous researchers, for example, have identified the genomes of various strains of this virus. These include Dr. Will Taylor and his research group from the University of Georgia.⁷ It was their work that enabled me to hypothesize that HIV must be depleting the body of the major nutrients required to produce the selenoenzyme glutathione peroxidase. Taylor and colleagues have identified, in the HIV genome, a gene that encodes for an analogue of this enzyme. Indeed they removed this gene from HIV and spliced it into other cells, demonstrating that they increased their production of glutathione peroxidase. Beyond this, it has been established that simian immunodeficiency viruses (SIV) occur in at least 26 different species of African nonhuman primates.⁸ It is difficult to see how so many geneticists could identify the genetic codes of strains of a virus that does not exist.

Ransom and Day also stress that the symptoms of AIDS have been discovered in patients who test negative for HIV. This

is correct. In *Science*, Duesberg⁹ reported over 2,000 cases of such HIV negative AIDS. The authors of *The Truth About HIV* consider that the existence of these patients prove that HIV never causes AIDS. This is illogical. The symptoms of AIDS, that is the collapse of the immune system, psoriasis, poor wound healing, diarrhea, muscle weakening and dementia, are all caused by the removal of selenium, cysteine, glutamine and tryptophan from the bodies of those who are infected by HIV. This process occurs because HIV encodes for glutathione peroxidase and so selectively removes these nutrients as it is replicated. However, Taylor and coworkers have shown that several other viruses also encode for glutathione peroxidase and so must also deplete the body of these essential nutrients. Included in this group of viruses are Coxsackie B, and Hepatitis B and C. There appear to be many more. A recent viral epidemic amongst Ontario's pigs¹⁰ was halted by feeding these animals with a diet enriched with selenium and these three amino acids. It is apparent, therefore, that other viruses, beyond HIV, may well be able to cause the symptoms of AIDS by nutritionally depleting those infected. Such patients would be classified as HIV negative AIDS patients.

A considerable portion of *The Truth About HIV* is devoted to questioning the validity of the ELISA and the Western Blot tests, suggesting that all positive results are false positive. The authors also discuss the toxicity of AZT and other anti-retroviral drugs. Much of this section of the book I found myself in agreement with. Antibodies should not be used as the key indicator of HIV infection, rapidly declining serum selenium levels are the best marker of imminent death from AIDS. The drug treatments for HIV/AIDS are similar to those for cancer, highly toxic and quite capable of causing an enormous range of highly dangerous side-effects. That is why it is easier to reverse AIDS with nutrition

in Africans who have never had the 'benefits' of anti-retrovirals than it is in North Americans who may have been exposed for long periods to a score or more of such drugs and their side-effects.

It follows, of course, that if there is no HIV there can be no AIDS. I found the weakest section of *The Truth About HIV* to be the section that attempts to argue that the skyrocketing death rates in sub-Saharan Africa are a myth and that any increasing mortality reflects malnutrition and the impacts of rejuvenated diseases such as tuberculosis. There appears to be a relationship between malnutrition and AIDS. HIV is very inefficient in infecting individuals who produce high levels of the selenoenzyme glutathione peroxidase. The poor, eating diets deficient in selenium and amino acids, are much easier to infect with HIV than the wealthy. That is why the AIDS pandemic did not reach the scale first predicted for Europe and North America and why it is still decimating sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed, it has been repeatedly demonstrated that viruses infect humans, animals and insects that are selenium deficient much more easily than those that are not. This is why HIV has spread so much more rapidly in those regions of sub-Saharan Africa, like Swaziland and Kwazulu-Natal that are naturally deficient in these trace elements than it has in Senegal, where soils and diet are elevated in selenium. Beyond this, AIDS is very rare in Bolivia, a major selenium exporter and in Finland which has added this mineral to its fertilizers for over 20 years.¹¹ Generally, however, as acid rain and fertilizers deplete the diet of selenium, HIV and other viruses rapidly diffuse causing the greatest havoc in areas like sub-Saharan Africa where soils are naturally low in the trace element. Of course, as HIV depresses the immune system the dormant bacteria responsible for tuberculosis are rejuvenated. This is why this old disease is now responsible

for many new deaths.

Finally, Ransom and Day emphasize cases of formerly diagnosed AIDS patients who have stopped their medications and followed metabolic procedures for reversing immune deficiency. Many appear to have recovered. Interestingly, this protocol includes supplementation with 200 micrograms of selenium daily and organic diets that supply high levels of amino acids. This approach is very similar to that suggested in my book *What Really Causes AIDS* and is likely to prevent HIV replication and reverse the nutritional deficiencies that are known as AIDS. Unfortunately, the Ransom/Day protocol is so complex that it will be largely useless in Africa or elsewhere in the developing world where AIDS is most prevalent.

—Review by Harold D. Foster, Ph.D

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Healing Children's Attention & Behavior Disorders

by Abram Hoffer, M.D., Ph.D.
CCNM Press, Toronto, 2004
Softcover, 342 pages

At lunch one day, as I poured a bunch of supplement tablets into my hand, Abram Hoffer quietly said to me, "You know, if you take all those vitamins, you'll live a lot longer." I paused just long enough for him to add, with half a smile, "It's true; I guarantee it. If you don't, come back and see me."

There are few physicians who have sufficient age and experience to personally validate such a claim. Dr. Hoffer can. He pioneered megavitamin research and treatment back in the early 1950s, and, over the decades since, has repeatedly demonstrated success treating children's behavior disorders using wholesome diet supplemented with high doses of vitamins.

For modifying diet, Hoffer's near-legendary "bedside" manner is direct and engaging. When he sits down with an ADHD child, he leans over towards the youngster and says, "No junk food. You know what that means." Dr. Hoffer will compromise to insure compliance, allowing recalcitrant children once-weekly "junk food Saturdays." This, predictably, results in some very sick Sundays, driving home the point with visceral experience rather than a lecture. And the lesson is re-learned well before school resumes on Monday.

Healing Children's Attention & Behavior Disorders is concise and powerful. A timely reissue of the 1999 book, *Dr. Hoffer's ABC of Natural Nutrition for Children*, pages 18-30 alone contain enough information to set modern medicine on its ear. This section forms the most elegant explanation of orthomolecular medicine since Linus Pauling's historic 1968 paper in *Science*.

Hoffer then devotes the rest of the

book to setting out genuine nutritional alternatives to drug therapy for ADHD children. He provides vitamin dosage details, food tables, and over 150 references. Over 100 case histories are included, along with a "Bad Foods" list, numerous research summaries, precise recommendations for optimum diet, comparisons of drugs and vitamins, a discussion of allergies and food additives, behavioral self-tests, and, most importantly, a wealth of professional experience.

People often ask, "If this treatment is so good, how come my doctor doesn't know about it? How come it is not in the news?" The answer may have more to do with medical politics than with medical science. Consider Hoffer's views on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: "The DSM system (the standard of the American Psychiatric Association) has little or no relevance to diagnosis. It has no relevance to treatment, either, because no matter which terms are used to classify these children, they are all recommended for treatment with drug therapy" combined, sometimes, with other non-nutritional approaches. "If the entire diagnostic scheme were scrapped today, it would make almost no difference to the way these children were treated, or to the outcome of treatment. Nor would their patients feel any better or worse." Statements like these do not exactly endear one to the medical community.

I am acquainted with a 10 year old boy who was having considerable school and behavior problems. Interestingly enough, the child was already on physician-prescribed little bits of niacin, for a total daily dose of less than 150 mg. But it wasn't enough to be effective, and the boy was slated for the Ritalin-for-lunch bunch. Instead, Mom tried the lad on 500 mg of B₃ three times daily, and immediately noticed improvement. When she doubled the dose to 3,000 mg/day (1,500 mg as niacin; 1,500 mg as niacinamide) the gains at home and in the classroom were unmistakable.

For those who say there is insufficient scientific evidence to support orthomolecular therapy for children's behavior disorders, I say they haven't been looking hard enough. Hoffer and his colleagues conducted the first double-blind controlled vitamin trials in psychiatric history in 1952. He was among the first to employ vitamin C as an antioxidant and first to use the B-vitamins against heart disease. Dr. Hoffer has over 500 publications to date, and yet this single book (and he has written 20 others) will present the reader with the most comprehensive and comprehensible review of vitamin therapy for ADHD that I have yet seen.

The best part of *Healing Children's Attention & Behavior Disorders* is that it is a book of practical, positive advice. Criticisms and even lawsuits over the hazards of tranquilizers and mind-modifying pharmaceuticals are on the rise, but neither court nor controversy can cure your child. "Battered parents" (Hoffer's term) need to know what to do, and now. Saying "no to drugs" also requires saying "yes" to something else. That something else is nutrition, properly employed. The simple way to determine whether vitamins will help your child is to try them. Reading *Healing Children's Attention & Behavior Disorders* will provide invaluable guidance from the foremost authority on the subject.

—Review by Andrew W. Saul, Ph.D.

Dying to Have Known

A documentary film by Steve Kroschel
Gerson Institute, San Diego, CA, 2006
www.gerson.org, DVD, 80 minutes

The best movies are those that we do not want to end. For a documentary to meet that criterion is unusual. One that definitely does meet it is *Dying*

to Have Known, a revealing, well constructed, interview-based presentation of the benefits of the Gerson therapy. The movie, which premiered in Manhattan at the New York International Film Festival, records experts' statements as they make them, pro or con, guarded or otherwise. It is also entertaining and persuasive cinema, a movie with a mission. That mission is the unabashed promotion of nutritional cancer therapy, still controversial seven decades after Max Gerson, M.D., first employed it.

The strength of *Dying to Have Known* is its interview footage coupled with expert editing. Not incidentally, the photography is beautiful, but we would expect that from director Steve Kroschel, a 20-year veteran filmmaker who honed his craft working on Disney, BBC, and IMAX movies. Departing his home base in rural Alaska, Kroschel embarks on a 52-day Gerson-fact-finding journey of Europe, Japan, and the USA. He wields a confident hand interviewing a variety of researchers, editors, and physicians. The positive testimonials are admittedly powerful. But it is the negative interviews that define the film. Like matinee villains, they are what make this film so interesting, and literally elicit hisses and hoots from audiences. "How did he ever get them to say *that*?" That is the touch of the master documentarian.

As Max Gerson's daughter, Charlotte, repeats her unequivocal statement "it is a scientific fact that the Gerson therapy cures cancer," in counterpoint the "bad guys" offer up the usual objections: that there is no evidence of success, or whatever evidence there is has been exclusively anecdotal and the records have been kept hidden from investigators. Those old saws collapse into rust as you watch *Dying to Have Known*. This movie shows, quite convincingly,

that the evidence for the Gerson therapy is good, is well-documented, and is not being concealed. Rather, the evidence is being ignored.

As you watch the film, skeptics and detractors repeatedly state their demands for placebo-controlled testing of the Gerson therapy. It appears they consider this to be their strongest point. In fact, it may be their weakest. The majority of medical procedures have never been adequately placebo tested. An example might be radiation therapy for cancer. Picture this: a sick, scared patient is told with confidence that, of course, radiation treatments are the best way to kill a given tumor. The patient is then subjected to long waits in waiting rooms with other believers, to high bills for the procedure, to awesomely large equipment with dials, lights, technicians and mysteries, and finally, to being placed nearly naked under or into an imposing machine.

To be scientific, let us have a second room, a placebo room, just as white and just as bright, housing a totally fake, placebo “radiation” machine. We shall make sure is just as impressive as the real deal, with lots of lights and dials that make the bridge of the starship *Enterprise* pale by comparison. We will provide research confederates disguised as fellow cancer sufferers, all chatting about the wonders of the impending treatment, and lots of dignified technicians, hurried doctors, and sky-high bills to match. Let this second “radiation” room be identical to the real one, but all completely phony. Then we will compare results.

In this case, might not placebo testing be seen as a ridiculous requirement? Yet, until it happens, we can only wonder what the success rate of the bogus “radiation treatments” would be. We will remain unsure exactly how much benefit is radiation, and how much is

expectation.

If we haven’t placebo-tested radiation therapy, and that is only one variable, how do we placebo-test the multiple variables inherent in a multifaceted nutritional treatment such as Gerson’s? With placebo vegetable juices?

It is unavoidably true that doctors’ success reports abound for the Gerson therapy. The film makes that plain, displaying on camera boxes and files brim full of verifiable physician records. To flatly dismiss this evidence as “merely anecdotal” is a convenient but specious argument. When, attempting to scientifically prove the benefits of inoculation, did health authorities vaccinate 100,000 toddlers for polio, give another 100,000 kids injections of sterile water, and then wait a few years to see who got paralyzed? Never. They looked at physician reports. Lots of them, and very carefully. The same should be done for the Gerson therapy.

Surely one of most people’s greatest fears is a diagnosis of cancer. When a natural, nontoxic therapy has support from the likes of distinguished professor of medicine, Yoshihiko Hoshino, M.D., and Cornell’s T. Colin Campbell, Ph.D., regarded by many as the world’s foremost authority on nutrition, it is time to look closer. A lot closer.

Dying to Have Known is natural healing right up there on the silver screen where it belongs. It is powerful, fast paced and compelling. If you are skeptical about alternative cancer treatment, see this movie. This film might do more than change your mind. It might change your lifestyle, change the world, and even change modern medicine. If this documentary is not immediately suppressed, millions of chronically ill people will get well. Good heavens, what a concept.

—Review by Andrew W. Saul, Ph.D.

**Hormone Balance: A Woman's Guide
to Restoring Health and Vitality**

by Carolyn Dean, M.D., N.D.

Adams Media, MA, 2005

Paperback, 310 pages

Bloating, cramping, fatigue, mood swings, weight gain, yeast infections, uncomfortable periods, and headaches: do any of these sound familiar? I know from personal experience that bloating had me gaining at least five pounds for a week; my headaches were so bad that after a year of continuous pain my medical doctor finally ordered an MRI; my mood swings made the man in my life hide for a week out of every month; and other problems like infections, cramping, and fatigue ruined the remaining days when I wasn't suffering all those other symptoms. It comes as no surprise that many of us pick up the very information we need the most when we are tired of feeling ill. This gave me reason to read Dr. Carolyn Dean's book with great interest. I wanted to know why that even with my good habits including vegetable juicing regularly, exercising five times a week, and taking my vitamins, I was still suffering. Upon reading *Hormone Balance: A Woman's Guide to Restoring Health and Vitality*, I realized it was a very delicate imbalance indeed that was causing the plethora of issues I was facing.

So many women suffer from a range of negative symptoms day in and day out. What if these women found out, as I did, that these troubles often tie directly into hormone imbalance within their bodies? What if women could fix the problem by undertaking simple and healthy lifestyle changes? Dr. Carolyn Dean's book offers comprehensive solutions to the common afflictions women face. There is no need to suffer: just give her a few hours of your time, an open mind, and get ready to take notes.

Carolyn Dean, the author of over 10

health books, has dedicated more than 25 years of her life to the medical field. As a physician, naturopathic doctor, herbalist, acupuncturist, and nutritionist, she takes topics that are inherently complicated and translates them into an easy to read chapters that will inform and motivate you. She begins *Hormone Balance* with a chapter entitled "Who's Suffering Now?," an overview of hormone issues affecting women in the twenty-first century. Chapter two teaches us about HRT and how menopause came to be called a disease. In chapter three, she takes us on a tour of our endocrine glands, explaining their function and problems that can arise. Chapter four looks specifically at the sex hormones. She dedicates chapter five of her book to issues associated with stress, highlighting its causes and do's and don'ts for dealing with it. To learn how to deal with the chemicals we are exposed to on a daily basis in the environment, check out chapters six and seven. What about peri-menopause, menopause, and osteoporosis? Read chapters eight, nine, and ten. For diet, exercise, and supplement guidelines to support healthy hormone balance, take a look at chapters eleven, twelve, and thirteen. Is she going to tell you to stop smoking? Yes. Is she going to tell you to eat right, take your vitamins, and exercise? Absolutely. But Dr. Dean doesn't just repeat what many of us already know to be true; she weaves into each chapter study after study, numerous references, historic links, and her ample experience. She leaves you feeling more confident, and far less confused.

Needless to say, I went straight to my vitamin cabinet with Dean's book in hand, and proceeded to note what vitamins and nutrients I needed more of, and what medications I didn't need at all. Over time, I have been able to restore balance, and others have appreciated the return of the old "me."

Easy to read, highly informative, and

user friendly, Dr. Carolyn Dean's book *Hormone Balance: A Woman's Guide to Restoring Health and Vitality* should not be missed. Any woman wanting to take charge of her body, and feel like herself again, simply must read this book.

—Review by Helen F. Saul, M.S. Ed.

Mad Cowboy: Plain Truth from the Cattle Rancher Who Won't Eat Meat
by Howard F. Lyman with Glen Merzer
Scribner, New York: 1998
Hardcover 224 pages

Why should you call me to account for eating decently? (George Bernard Shaw, in *The Vegetarian*, 15 January 1898.)

Howard Lyman, a raised-to-graze, fourth-generation dairy farmer and cattle rancher, is that arch-heretic of animal husbandry: he's a vegan. Lyman and his expert collaborator, Glen Merzer, have written *Mad Cowboy*, a concise, in-your-face book full of meat-busting facts. This book really homes in on the range.

For example, Lyman writes that cattle are fed "ground-up dead horses, dogs, cats, pigs, chickens, and turkeys, as well as blood and fecal material of their own species." Then he lets us in on a little cattle-raising trade secret: steers are regularly fattened on chicken feces.

This is gross. And wonderful reading, too. Face it: the government is certainly not protecting you. Slaughterhouse quality control, such as it is, is simply not working. "About 80% of food poisonings come from meat," Lyman says. And he is no friend of Col. Sanders, either: "Approximately 30% of chicken consumed in America is contaminated with salmonella, and 70–90% with another deadly pathogen, campylobacter," which he cites as a cause of Guillain-Barre syndrome,¹ a rapid-onset paralytic disease.

Oversight and inspection by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration is so lax because they "can generally be counted on to behave not like public servants but like hired hands of the meat and dairy industries." Lyman says, "The government is going to inspect one out of every two hundred fifty thousand carcasses."

Mr. Lyman is just warming up. "Nearly all meat in America is contaminated with such man-made carcinogens as dioxins, a family of chemicals related to Agent Orange, and DDT." Cattle feed is higher in pesticides than crops grown directly for human consumption. A *New England Journal of Medicine* study² "found that the breast milk of vegetarian women had only 1–2% of the national average of pesticide contamination."

"Meat kills," Lyman bluntly declares, citing the all-too-familiar coroner's equation: fat plus cholesterol equals cardiovascular deaths. We have all heard this before, but we often ignore two important facts: there is very little fat in plant foods, and plant foods contain zero cholesterol. Meat has plenty of both. "It kills us just as dead as tobacco kills us, but far more frequently." "(W)e have to do all we can to keep our young people from getting hooked on those fat-and-cholesterol delivery systems know as hot dogs, hamburgers, scrambled eggs, and ice cream." It looks to Mr. Lyman that, supersized or not, those McArtery meals have got to go. To him, Ronald McDonald must seem to be little more than a badly-dressed Marlboro man.

And he's probably right.

In the 100 years since Sinclair Lewis published *The Jungle*,³ practically nothing has changed. You had best put down those chicken fingers before reading this: "Slaughterhouses are efficient factories for spreading pathogens from one chicken to the next...covered with feces, bile and feed...(I)ndividual chicken inspectors ex-

amine about 12,000 chickens a day, each for about two seconds.” Lyman writes that, in America, contaminated chicken kills over one thousand people annually, and sickens perhaps 80 million more.

He does not allow eating fish, either. In addition to citing evidence of bacterial contamination in seafood that would make Captain Nemo blush, Lyman relentlessly adds that omega-3 fatty acids, considered to be one of the main benefits of eating seafood, “can just as easily be obtained” by eating seeds, vegetable oils, wheat germ and vegetables. Important though those sources be, I think that for many people, fish remains the surest way of consuming adequate amounts of omega-3’s. But on the other hand, Mr. Lyman’s relentless listing of pollutants now found in seafood deserves renewed appreciation of vegetarian alternatives.

Many more of the most powerful vegetarian arguments ever made are compiled in *Mad Cowboy*, with supporting research ably summarized. For instance, studies of tens of thousands of Seventh Day Adventists “found the rate of heart disease mortality to be one-third as high for the lacto-ovo (dairy and egg) vegetarians as for the meat eaters. For the vegans, the rate was one-tenth as high.” The massive Cornell University China Health Project⁴ “determined that those who eat the least animal products have the lowest rates of cancer, heart disease and several other degenerative diseases.” Specifically, Lyman indicts osteoporosis, diabetes, obesity and hypertension as maladies due largely to our habitual feasting on dead animal muscle. And “feasting” is the correct word: Americans eat ten times the animal protein as do the Chinese. And the few Chinese that can afford to eat as much meat as we do get the same diseases as Americans already have.

Wisely, Lyman backs up his statements, citing additional studies from around the world, and providing unobtru-

sive but exact footnotes for easy reference. An index, recommended reading list, and several pages of sources and bibliography complete the work.

Mad Cowboy is by no means the only well-written, concise book on the rationale for a meatless lifestyle. Twenty years back, I’d read a charmingly illustrated yet profound little paperback called, *What’s Wrong with Eating Meat?*⁵ Many readers have become familiar with the best selling *Diet for a Small Planet* from 1971,⁶ and others know of the century-old vegetarian essays by Bernard Shaw or Gandhi. The writings of physicians such as Tilden, Jackson and Trall of the Natural Hygienic movement in the 19th century predate the lot.⁷

A young Mr. Lyman knew nothing of these. Doing farm chores at age five, castrating calves at age ten, and paying his way through agricultural college on his poker winnings, he was bound and determined to make a success of feedlot farming. And so he did, lacing his 7,000 steers’ feed with antibiotics, diethylstilbestrol (DES) and an array of other “suspect” drugs purchased in quantity just before they were banned.

It was a rough life, especially for the cattle. “The flies can get so thick they actually threaten a cow’s ability to breathe. . . Every morning I would fill up a fly fogger with insecticide and spray great clouds of it over the whole operation... (and) covering their backs with insecticide that was absorbed through the skin.” In following such practices, dangerous as they are to animals, farmer and the public, Lyman’s cattle operation was not unusual.

His own particular claim to fame stems from 1996 when he, along with Oprah Winfrey, was sued for “food disparagement” by a group of Texas cattlemen. In 1998, he won. The result was *Mad Cowboy* (and www.madcowboy.com). What at first glance might pass for just another brief celebrity turn actually delivers far

more. There is not a dull paragraph to be found in *Mad Cowboy*. I absolutely loved reading it, even though compared to the vegan Lyman, I am merely a moderate, or what I call a “near vegetarian.” Unlike Lyman, I think fish and dairy products remain nutritionally important. Even Lyman acknowledges that Dr. Dean Ornish allows nonfat milk, nonfat yogurt, and egg whites in the diet he prescribes to reverse coronary disease. But surely we overconsume protein foods in general and flesh foods in particular. And like Lyman, I once was a dairy farmer. I now advocate sharp reductions in meat intake, ones that will save human lives, along with saving literally ten billion animals each year, in America alone, from a walk onto the killing floor. And yes, ten “billion” is not a misprint.⁸

Of course, *Mad Cowboy* addresses Mad Cow disease (bovine spongiform encephalopathy), and does so in considerable detail in Chapter Five. Chapter Six discusses recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH), given to cows to force higher milk production. The chapter is an attack on cow abuse (and on the Monsanto Chemical Corporation) that you have to read to believe. When I was a dairyman, I personally milked a hundred head twice daily. Since then, I have presented many a college lecture on rBGH. Lyman knows exactly what he is talking about. The hidden (and taxpayer-supported) costs of the meat industry, and livestock-caused environmental destruction are covered in Chapter Seven. Chapter Eight presents vegetarian diet as the ideal weight loss technique, which it is. Lyman and co-author Merzer literally rip into high-protein diets (such as Atkins or *The Zone*) with such well-developed criticism as to show for all time why veggie dieting is the way to go.

For such a relatively short book, *Mad Cowboy* contains meat-munching, myth-mangling facts by the trainload. But what

draws you in most is Lyman’s personal writing style. Lyman is talking directly to you, and he’s one fine raconteur. (“I came in with so much herbicide on my clothing that my mere presence killed off the houseplants.”)

But there is no humor to be found in Lyman’s account of his ever-increasing health problems that finally forced his reconsideration of the ethics and the consequences of his livelihood. Even after serious spine surgery, a meat-fed Lyman says “I weighed 350 pounds, my cholesterol was over 300, my blood pressure was off the charts, and I was getting nosebleeds” in addition to eyesight problems. His response was to change his entire life: he became an organic farmer, ran for Congress in 1982 and very nearly made it, and became a vegetarian. “Within a year of eating no meat, my health problems all started to go away. . . Everything revolved around the fork.” Lyman asserts, “Since I became a vegetarian eight years ago, I have lost 130 pounds steadily, gradually, and without trying. I never gained any of the weight back, and never felt hungry. I never went on a diet, never counted my calories. . . I simply stopped eating animal products. . . My cholesterol count declined from 300 to 140, my blood pressure went from dangerously high levels to normal ones, and my energy levels increased.”

Having raised my children in an lacto-ovo vegetarian household, I have observed and experienced many of the health benefits of which Lyman speaks. Though I may personally prefer near-vegetarian nutritional reform to vegan nutritional revolution, compromise is possible. Lyman presents transitional eating hints and insights in pages. They are practical and do-able in every way. This is a book that does not require your agreement, just your action. From cover to cover, *Mad Cowboy* speaks with power, and that is the main reason you should read it. Lyman effectively says, to Hades

with half measures: just stop eating meat. The benefits are many and significant, as any sane cow would likely agree.

–Review by Andrew W. Saul, Ph.D.

References

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