

“Lying to the American people  
wasn't part of my job description.”

Ralph W. Moss, PhD

# SECOND OPINION

LAETRILE AT SLOAN-KETTERING



\* This document is not included in the documentary *Second Opinion*, but it gives some insight to the political climate around Laetrile when the War On Cancer was first enacted.

This is Congressional Testimony by Dr. Dean Burk, the head of the National Cancer Institute's Cytochemistry Sector, with Congressman Symington.

*Second Opinion: Laetrile At Sloan-Kettering* is available on Blu-ray, DVD, and Video On Demand.

Also available is *Doctored Results*, a new book & companion guide to this documentary by Ralph W. Moss, PhD

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Mr. SYMINGTON. This interests me for a number of reasons.

One, it illuminates an area we haven't much covered and that is the relationship between the NIH and FDA and specifically NCI and FDA.

For example, after this rebuff from FDA, what prevented you from going higher in your own organization and saying, "Now look, this might be effective against cancer. These fellows have rejected an experiment and conclusion which proves that Laetrile is less damaging than sugar and that we cannot allow this conclusion to stand, we must proceed with further testing," and why could you not then pit the mighty against the FDA and get done what you as a scientist want to see done and have a duty to see that it is done?

Dr. BURK. The answer I think is fairly plain. They are all of the same bureaucracy, where the first rule is all stick together. They are like cogs and wheels, and wheels within wheels in a clock, the winding up of which is done by outside medical bureaucracies, who give orders.

Mr. SYMINGTON. Your superiors?

Dr. BURK. Yes, administrative—though not scientific—superiors, acting along with part of the AMA, American Cancer Society, and FDA. I will name them if you like; Dr. Carl Baker, Dr. Kenneth Endicott, formerly in Dr. Baker's position, Surgeon General Dr. Jesse Steinfeld, Director of NIH Robert Marston, and now Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare Elliot Richardson. It is easier for them to stick together, than to be upright and forthright as individuals.

Mr. SYMINGTON. Would you give the title?

Dr. BURK. Yes, Dr. Baker is now the Director of the National Cancer Institute.

Mr. SYMINGTON. Was he then?

Dr. BURK. Part of the time, yes. And before him was Dr. Kenneth Endicott, and then, of course, Dr. Jesse Steinfeld has been Surgeon General for 2 or 3 years. I regard the latter as the ring-leader of the anti-Laetriliters in the United States although one of the least scientifically informed on the matter, any protestations to the contrary notwithstanding, as I have specifically delineated in my letter

of March 23, 1971, to Secretary Richardson; copy of which letter will be provided you.<sup>1</sup>

All of these gentlemen have written letters essentially at the untruth level of the FDA. All of them have told literal lies along with innumerable red herrings. I mean documentable lies, such as I will submit to you in exemplified documented detail in due course.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. SYMINGTON. All of the gentlemen you just mentioned?

Dr. BURK. Yes, all of them without exception.

Mr. SYMINGTON. Wittingly have told a lie?

Dr. BURK. Yes, a lie is deliberate.

Mr. SYMINGTON. Why would they do such a thing, do you suppose?

Dr. BURK. I have been asked that by many lay persons and physicians. The above named persons don't want Laetrile or any similar nontoxic drug to even be tested, officially or unofficially, at the clinical level. As documentable facts show, they have been willing to stop such testing at virtually any and all costs, including prevarication and a variety of subtle iniquities.

Mr. SYMINGTON. Why would they want to stop something? When they are looking forward to a half billion dollars to search for an unknown thing, why would they refuse to take something that is there that would work, if indeed it would?

Dr. BURK. For a number of reasons, the most innocuous of which is their previous training.

Mr. SYMINGTON. Taught them to reject a cure?

Dr. BURK. Let us not put it quite that way. Let us say that it has restricted their outlook in that particular direction.

Mr. SYMINGTON. To the point of mendacity?

Dr. BURK. Yes, if you mean by that financial—

Mr. SYMINGTON. No, that is "mendicancy." I mean to the point of lying about it.

Dr. BURK. Yes, I have declared so in print and it has been printed many times that Commissioner Edwards deliberately so lied before the Fountain Committee on June 9, 1970, and a vast number of people have read of this, and the FDA congressional liaison officer, M. J. Ryan, and others have continued unabated to promulgate such untruth.

I am now writing a letter to Secretary Richardson in which I make the same charge to and about him regarding his letter of August 26, 1971, to Chairman Fountain. I will submit a copy of my letter to Secretary Richardson along with my corrected verbal testimony, which would be included here or as a concluding formal statement.

(See letter dated October 19, 1971, p. 714, this hearing.)

Mr. SYMINGTON. That would include Secretary Richardson as well?

Dr. BURK. It does now because he repeated many of the same lies—prevarications, mendacities, call them what you will—and red herrings.

Mr. SYMINGTON. It is a good thing the President has not mentioned it.

Dr. BURK. I would hope that the President has more important things to do than lie about Laetrile. Now, at FDA-Richardson level, they are not worried too much about what Congress would do about such lies. On the other hand, people that are down below FDA-Richardson level would probably innocently assume, as even you have scarcely raised your eyebrows about, that this administrative level would not lie, so it would seem a usually pretty safe thing for powers that have power to lie from time to time.

The only trouble with it is that is that if some other power takes enough exception, then trouble can develop. I do not think I am telling you anything that you could not have told me 40 years ago.

Mr. SYMINGTON. In my case, about 20 years ago.

Dr. BURK. Well, then, your father.

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