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The Criminalization of Medicine: America's War on Doctors (Praeger Series on Contemporary Health & Living)

Ronald T. Libby

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Medical doctors have been made political scapegoats for the financial crisis of healthcare and the failed war on drugs in the United States, says author Ronald Libby. In order to combat health fraud and abuse, the government launched tough new laws and guidelines designed to battle rising urban violent crimes, illegal drugs, and terrorism. But, by eliminating safeguards to protect the innocent, those same laws and guidelines also made it far easier for agents and prosecutors to arrest, charge, fine, convict, and imprison physicians. Current witch hunts for doctors now include wiretaps and whistleblowers who get 35 percent of the fines, even before conviction. Under a new doctrine of harmless error a doctor receives no protection against false testimony, Libby explains all of this, offering cases from media reports, personal interviews, and records of trial as examples in this compelling book. Huge law enforcement bureaucracies have been created to target doctors for alleged fraud, kickbacks, and drug diversion. Federal, state, and local police are rewarded for prosecuting doctors and other healthcare professionals, while investigators and prosecutors receive pay raises and promotions, and law enforcement agencies seize the assets of doctors charged with felonies. Libby explains that doctors are prosecuted for billing mistakes, for referring patients to clinics, or treating pain patients with pain-relieving drugs. They receive large fines and long prison sentences, some even harsher than those given common criminals who've committed the most violent offenses. Join Senior Research Fellow Libby, who is also a Professor of Political Science, as he shows us why doctors have been demonized as corrupt and greedy entrepreneurs, how media sensationalizes doctors' arrests, and what unjust prosecution could mean for the future of healthcare.

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