

Optimum launches, Bad Blood The Unspeakable Truth

Now an 8 Part CBC Docudrama

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Since the 1995 publication of *Bad Blood, The Tragedy of the Canadian Tainted Blood Scandal* much has changed in the Canadian blood collection and distribution system.

Despite this, many of the issues that arose in the 1980s resulting from contamination of the blood supply with HIV and Hepatitis C (HCV) still haunt the governments, agencies and consumers of blood products and donors.

Many of these changes were driven by the \$15 million report prepared under the direction of Justice Horace Krever whose commission conducted a detailed examination of Canada's blood system in the 1990s. For example, the Red Cross is now out of the blood system replaced by [Canadian Blood Services](#) and Hema-Quebec, stand-alone agencies whose only responsibility is collection and distribution of blood and its products.

The reissuance of an updated version of *Bad Blood* comes at a time when an eight-part mini-series, *Unspeakable*, is being prepared for TV distribution. The series, based in part on *Bad Blood* and on the personal experience of executive producer Robert C. Cooper, who was infected with HCV through blood products, is expected to air in early 2019. It is being funded by CBC and Sundance TV.

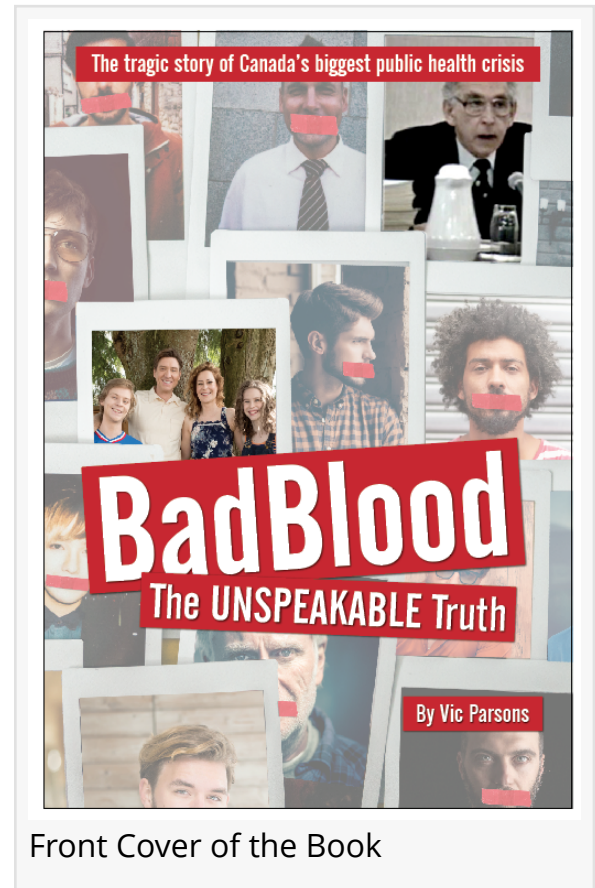
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The Crown sent a lot of good foot soldiers, but the defence sent generals.”
—Mike McCarthy Hepatitis C Victims Committee

We took our country's blood supply for granted — safe, available, life-saving.

We did so at our peril. We now know that more than a thousand Canadians who had transfusions in the late 1970s and 80s—hemophiliacs, surgery patients, accident victims, women and their babies in childbirth—were infected with HIV. More than 70 percent have since died of AIDS. Thousands more were infected with preventable hepatitis and have struggled with cirrhosis and even liver cancer.

Hemophiliacs were the proverbial canaries in the coal mine—an early warning sign that there was something terribly wrong with the Canadian blood supply. Yet officials denied there were



Front Cover of the Book

issues at all, and in fact covered up clear evidence that they had failed to take sometimes simple actions that would have saved countless lives. We cannot allow the agencies that protect our health care system to look the other way or put budgets before patients.

Twenty-five years later—thanks largely to Justice Krever and his exhaustive public inquiry—much has changed, but this story should still serve as a stark reminder that citizens deserve better from the people who are paid to serve and protect the patients in our health care system.

"In this timeless book, [Vic Parsons](#) brings to life many tragic tales of the people affected by HIV and hepatitis C infections from a blood supply that was their lifeline. He also recounts their quest for justice and compensation from a government that wanted to deny culpability. It's a compelling read for all."

—DEAN BAXENDALE, PUBLISHER

The story of Canada's worst medical catastrophe

Controversy still rages over the for-profit collection of blood by certain corporations. This collection has been banned in Ontario, Quebec and Alberta, but is permitted in Saskatchewan. Survivors from the 1980s recall that the collection of imported for-profit products from the United States, notably from prisons, was a major factor in the infection of Canada's blood supply. Supporters of for-profit collections argue that Canada does not collect enough blood through its voluntary donation system and imported products are necessary to meet demand.

The update of *Bad Blood*, and the mini-series *Unspeakable*, are timely reminders to the public of the past tragedies and cautionary tales for the future.

"The story of Canada's worst medical catastrophe must not be forgotten. Vic Parsons's new and updated edition of his 1993 book should be required reading for people responsible for managing our health system."

—DAVID PAGE, NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF HEMOPHILIA CANADA



Judge Krever delivered a scathing indictment of Government Blood oversight



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