

from Leslie Feinberg August 2011 transgenderwarrior.org
my research notes on the medical politics driving the "Lyme Wars"

Part 3

'Perfect storm': Lyme pathogen & capitalist interests

The corkscrew bacterium called a spirochete that causes Lyme was reportedly first discovered in 1981. The timing of federal deregulation a year earlier, in 1980, was described as a "perfect storm" in U.S. medical history in the 2009 Oscar-nominated documentary "Under Our Skin."

Federal deregulation has allowed the U.S. government and universities to patent pathogens and profit from live organisms. As a result, those considered "experts" on Lyme after it was officially discovered in 1981, can keep their information secret from other labs to protect their possible future profits. ("Under Our Skin." excerpt 2, youtube.com)

In the October 2008 Marin Magazine, Jane Ganahl interviewed Northern California resident Andy Abrahams Wilson, director/producer of "Under Our Skin." Wilson said he had believed for years that his twin sister, who was sick with Lyme disease, was really just "lazy."

Jane Ganahl wrote: "It took Wilson two years, 375 hours of film, and bottomless heartache to learn how wrong he was. The Emmy Award-nominated producer/director plunged himself into the Lyme disease epidemic: documenting the lives of sufferers, investigating the controversy about treatment, exposing a conflict-of-interest scandal in the medical establishment--and raising the red flag of epidemic."

Ganahl explained, "The film, which was a finalist for the Audience Award at Tribeca Film Festival (and has won five Best Documentary awards since then), contends that the medical society that sets the standard for Lyme disease treatment is guilty of conflicts-of-interest and, in some cases, in bed with insurance companies--a contention now corroborated by a lawsuit brought by Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal."

In an article titled "Lyme disease politics put patients at risk," journalist Suzan Erem stressed, "At issue is the very credibility of the IDSA, which activists say holds much sway over the medical establishment." (voicesweb.org)

Erem cited the documentary "Under Our Skin" and a background paper from the California Lyme Disease Association for reports that 11 of the 12 IDSA members who set the IDSA guidelines in 2000, and 10 of the 14 members who set the more restrictive guidelines in 2006, held direct or indirect (through their academic institution) interest in a Lyme vaccination."

Next: U.S. gov't probe: 'potential conflicts of interest'