



Silicone Spills: Breast Implants on Trial

Mary White Stewart

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For 30 years, silicone gel breast implants were marketed to and implanted in at least one million women in the U.S. alone, damaging the health of hundreds of thousands. To many women seeking to improve their appearance, these virtually untested implants were promoted as a safe, lifelong answer to their needs. In actuality, however, they have been the cause of devastating, often irreversible health problems, making the implantation of these bags of gel one of the worst health care debacles in recent memory. Lawsuits against the manufacturers and the resulting trials have made prominent headlines and are a matter of public records, but until the publication of *Silicone Spills: Breast Implants on Trial*, there has never been a sophisticated and accurate presentation of the women who have had implants, why they have had them, and what has happened to them socially, medically, and legally as a result.

Silicone Spills portrays the breast implant business as a personal and social tragedy, as well as a complex legal and political controversy. Sociologist Mary White Stewart interviewed over 50 women at great length, examined questionnaires completed by 60 other women, observed pre-trial hearings and courtroom proceedings during the litigation against implant manufacturers, and read countless documents and press coverage about the cases. The fascinating and horrifying story she tells in this book, full of women's personal experiences, is a tale of corporate greed, of the commodification and medicalization of women's bodies, and of women's lack of personal and economic power. How can so many women have been damaged and failed by the very people and institutions that exist to protect them? *Silicone Spills* reveals that the complex answers to this question lie in our culture, in which women continue to be eager consumers of any procedures and products that seductively promise physical transformation into the desirable feminine ideal.

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