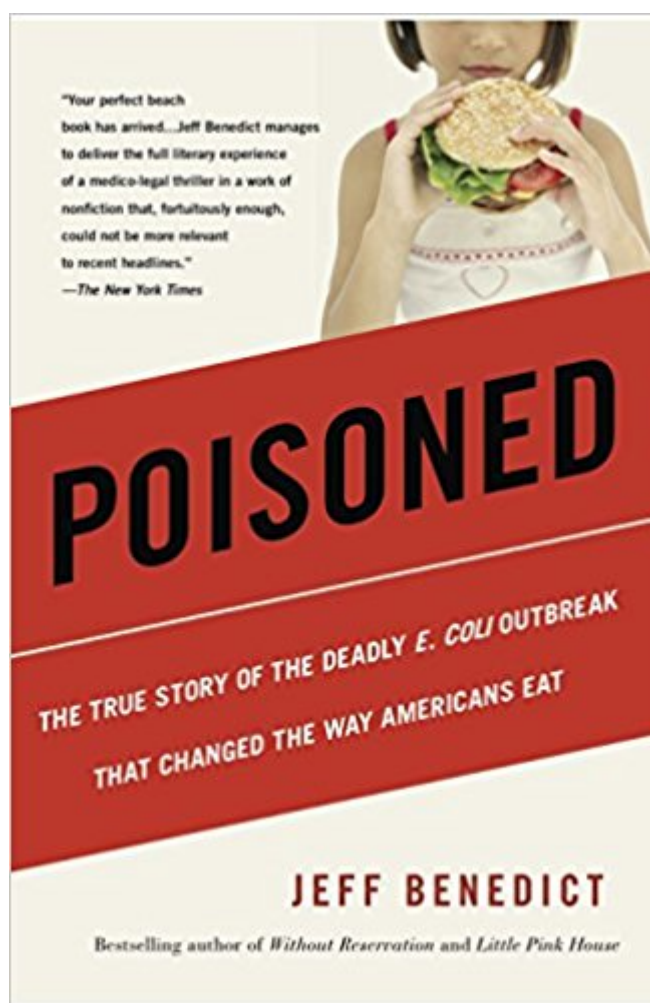


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# Poisoned: The True Story Of The Deadly E. Coli Outbreak That Changed The Way Americans Eat



## Synopsis

"Your perfect beach book has arrived. With *Poisoned*, Jeff Benedict manages to deliver the full literary experience of a medico-legal thriller in a work of nonfiction that, fortuitously enough, could not be more relevant to recent headlines."—The New York Times

In this riveting work of narrative nonfiction, award-winning journalist and best-selling author Jeff Benedict chronicles the events surrounding the biggest food-poisoning epidemic in US history and how this unprecedented crisis sparked public awareness about unsanitary practices in the fast food industry. *Poisoned* draws on access to confidential documents and exclusive interviews with the real-life characters at the center of the drama. Jeff Benedict is considered one of America's top nonfiction writers. He is the author of nine books including bestsellers *Little Pink House*, *Without Reservation*, and *Pros and Cons*. His reporting has been the basis of feature segments on *60 Minutes*, ABC's *20/20*, *Dateline NBC*, HBO's *Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel*, and the *Discovery Channel*. He is a contributor to *Sports Illustrated* and the *Deseret News*, and his articles have been published in *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Newsweek*, and the *Hartford Courant*. He has a law degree and is a distinguished professor of English at Southern Virginia University.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A fast-paced narrative and a cautionary tale about how public health policy, corporate practices and public relations, and lawyers' chutzpah and frenzy for fees can converge in a place we all know well." --Associated Press

"A new, thriller-style account of the horrors of that E. coli outbreak and the subsequent events, including the groundbreaking rulings making O157:H7 an "adulterant". --Mark

Bittman, The New York Times "Spartan prose delivers a chilling, page-turning lesson in food safety."  
--Kirkus Reviews "Movie-like ...Benedict does a dramatic public service by showing us what happened behind the scenes." --Christian Science Monitor "Part thriller, part investigative expose, and all human, "Poisoned" lays out in rich, untold detail the tragic yet ultimately inspiring story behind the largest deadly E. coli outbreak in history." --Armen Keteyian, CBS News --This text refers to the Kindle Edition edition.

Jeff Benedict is considered one of America's top non-fiction writers. He is the author of nine books including bestsellers *Little Pink House*, *Without Reservation*, and *Pros and Cons*. His reporting has been the basis of feature segments on 60 Minutes, ABC's 20/20, Dateline NBC, HBO's Real Sports, and the Discovery Channel. He is a contributor for Sports Illustrated and The Deseret News and his articles have also been published in The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Newsweek and The Hartford Courant. He has a law degree and is a Distinguished Professor of English at Southern Virginia University.

21 years ago my 4 year old son, 6 year old daughter and I were all affected by the E-Coli outbreak in Washington. While my son and I recovered after several days of extreme illness my 6 year old daughter did not. She continued to progressively get worse. We were some of the early cases so it hadn't hit the news yet. When my daughter was admitted to the hospital the doctors told us she should have been at the very least comatose if not dead. How does a parent react to that? We had been taking her to the doctors for 2 weeks. While they told us they would do everything they could to save her we knew they were preparing us for her to die. No one expected her to live. She suffered acute kidney failure, HUS and later a stroke. The only chance they had of saving her was to do dialysis twice in the first 24 hours. It was dangerous but our only option at that time. We spent our time at Children's Hospital in the room across the hall from Brianne Kiner (whose story is told in the book). It was a difficult time for all of us. While Jeff's book brought back a flood of memories from that time it also brought about a healing that I hadn't realized I needed. I was fascinated as I read his book and learned about the "other side" of the story. His book was very personal to me. I recognized the names and people in the book as we had also connected with so many of them. I'm grateful to Jeff for taking the time to research this event and tell the story. For those of us who lived through the event and were personally affected by it, this book provides a new level of healing for us. My daughter did survive. The doctors could not explain her recovery. By all medical standards she should have died. Her healing was truly a miracle. My thanks go out to Jeff for helping to heal

my heart in new ways.

Poisoned is the story of the Jack In The Box E coli outbreak and the major players in that story. It is well written and holds your interest through the tragedies and triumphs that came out of this event. It follows how the corporation changed how they handled food, how the attorney who protected the rights of the victims became an advocate for food safety, and how this event changed how the public is protected against food poisoning. It includes the important information about the disease and the law, yet does an excellent job of making that information easy to understand by a layperson. If you know more about the science and law, it is written in a way that does not bore you. All in all, a book that can inform people about how our food supply works, and sometimes does not work, and the importance of food safety.

I bought this book as a required text for a class I took from the author. The book itself is respectable, particularly for the detailed research that went in to writing it, and it was mildly engaging (though I probably would have stopped reading it if I didn't have to take a test on it), but it's not something I'll ever pick up and read again. My real problem with the book is that the premise is a bit misleading. The book bills itself as "The True Story of the Deadly E. Coli Outbreak that Changed the Way Americans Eat," but the real story, per the author's own words, is about the lawyer. Actually, all of Jeff Benedict's books are like that - they're about individual people more than the event. You're led to believe that the book is about the victims, but it's really the story of two people we don't meet until a third of the way through the book - Bill Marler, an unheard-of lawyer with an unorthodox approach to litigation (buzzword!), who used the deadly e. coli outbreak to force fast food companies to think long and hard about food safety, and a consultant working for Jack-in-the-Box who rewrote the health and inspection standards that govern the national beef supply industry.

This is an amazing book which gives you insight on how a company managed what was a terrible situation and turned it into a valuable lesson on the importance in food safety. Most companies don't survive recalls, but Jack in Box came out and was upfront with the public throughout the ordeal. Bill Marler has gone on to write on FoodSafetyNews.com which is a great website to keep track of recent recalls, outbreaks, outbreak findings, and how to improve food safety. If you work at all in anything food/feed related this is an important book to read.

This book starts out interestingly enough with the traceback of the illnesses to burgers from Jack in the Box, and the emergence of E. coli O157:H7 as a dangerous strain, but it soon dissolves into The Bill Marler Story. This would have been much more compelling if the author had examined more closely the aftermath of the outbreak for the victims, or how it changed food policy and regulation (there is zero mention--even in the afterword--about how USDA declared O157:H7 an adulterant as a result of this outbreak, which was a monumental shift for a food intended to be cooked before eating). The book focuses far too much on Marler's personal life and how the case made him professionally, and reeks of thinly-veiled promotion for his firm.

the story is a can't put down one, however it has its sad spots. The story is a detailed one of the Jack in the Box Food poisoning event and the victims are children, which gives the story its sad spots. Also is interesting, no, its fascinating, how an insurance lawyer (car accidents, slip and falls) got turned into one of the premier foodborne illness litigator of the current day. I would recommend the book. Several of my friends are in line to borrow it from me.

The story is compelling, however I found the writing style to be very simple. While I did like that there was little bias, it seemed like every party received quite a bit of sympathy. I am in the food industry so maybe I was just expecting this book to detail the operational changes that took place due to the incident, rather than a detailed account of the lawyer's relationship with his wife. If you have no experience in food service/safety, this book is a decent read.

Not my favorite book. Could have been summarized in a single chapter. Felt a bit like propaganda against the food industry.

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