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978-0-521-03250-6 - The Story of Taxol: Nature and Politics in the Pursuit of an Anti-Cancer Drug

Jordan Goodman and Vivien Walsh

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The Story of Taxol: Nature and Politics in the Pursuit of an Anti-cancer Drug

Taxol is arguably the most celebrated, talked about, and controversial natural product in recent years: Celebrated because of its efficacy as an anti-cancer drug and because its discovery has provided powerful support for policies concerned with biodiversity. Talked about because in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the American public was bombarded with news reports about the molecule and its host, the slow-growing Pacific yew. Controversial because the drug and the tree became embroiled in several sensitive political issues with broad public policy implications.

Taxol has revolutionized the treatment options for patients with advanced forms of breast and ovarian cancers and some types of leukemia; it shows promise for treating AIDS-related Kaposi's sarcoma. It is the best-selling anti-cancer drug ever, with world sales of \$1.2 billion in 1998 and expected to grow. Goodman and Walsh's careful study of how taxol was discovered, researched, and brought to market documents the complexities and conflicting interests in the ongoing process to find effective treatments. From a broader perspective, *The Story of Taxol* uses the discovery and development of taxol as a paradigm to address current issues in the history and sociology of science and medicine.

Jordan Goodman is Senior Lecturer in History at the Manchester School of Management, University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology. Goodman's previous books include *Tobacco in History* (1994) and *Consuming Habits: Drugs and History in Anthropology* (1995).

Vivien Walsh is Reader in Technology Management at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology. She has been researching the pharmaceutical and chemical industries for years and is currently working on globalization of innovative activity in the chemical, pharmaceutical, and agro-food industries. Walsh has been a consultant to the European Commission and to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

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JORDAN GOODMAN

VIVIEN WALSH

University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology



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For Danny and Ben

For Daniel and in memory of Jacky Weiss

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ABBREVIATIONS

Primary Material

BOL	Papers in the possession of Chuck Bolsinger
CON	Papers in the possession of Patrick Connolly
DST	Papers in the possession of John Destito
EDF	Papers in the Environmental Defense Fund
FRD*	Papers in the Natural Products Branch, National Cancer Institute
GCB	Papers in the Grants and Contracts Operations Branch, National Cancer Institute
NPB*	Papers in the Natural Products Branch, National Cancer Institute
NPB(S)*	Papers in the Natural Products Branch, National Cancer Institute
PER	Papers in the possession of Robert Perdue
SCH	Papers in the possession of Stanley Scher
SPJ	Papers in the possession of Richard Spjut
UDA	Papers in the Agricultural Research Service, United States Department of Agriculture
WLL	Papers in the possession of Monroe Wall
WOD	Papers in the possession of Wendell Wood

* Primary materials in the Natural Products Branch do not have designations. These are ones devised and used by the authors to organize the material.