



THE
BIG
HOAX

BIG CON TENTS

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BIG Beginnings

— **O** —
The Start.
Who is Big Pharma.
The Good in the industry.

The Start.



“
The American drug industry arose during the same 19th-century milieu that gave rise to the American Medical Association.

Mike Magee, Lit Hub

The roots of the pharmaceutical industry lie back with the apothecaries and pharmacies that offered traditional remedies as far back as the middle ages, offering a hit-and-miss range of treatments based on centuries of folk knowledge.

But the industry as we understand it today really has its origins in the second half of the 19th century. Whilst the scientific revolution of the 17th century had spread ideas of rationalism and experimentation, and the industrial revolution had transformed the production of goods in the late 18th century, the marrying of the two concepts for the benefit of human health was a comparatively late development.

Merck in Germany was possibly the earliest company to move in this direction. Originating as a pharmacy founded in Darmstadt in 1668, it was in 1827 that Heinrich Emanuel Merck began the transition towards an industrial and scientific concern, by manufacturing and selling alkaloids.

Similarly, whilst GlaxoSmithKline's origins can be traced back as far as 1715, it was only in the middle of the 19th century that Beecham became involved in the industrial production of medicine, producing patented medicine from 1842, and the world's first factory for producing only medicines in 1859.⁽¹⁾



1863

Bayer was founded in 1863 as a dye maker in Wuppertal, the hometown of Karl Marx's collaborator Friedrich Engels. It later moved into medicines, commercialising aspirin around the turn of the 20th century, one of the most successful pharmaceuticals ever at that point. The unregulated nature of the trade in medicines during this period ensured there was a far less strict delineation between 'pharmaceutical' and 'chemical' industries than we have nowadays. These companies focused as much on cod liver oil, toothpaste, citric acid for soft drinks, and hair gel as on prescription medicines, as well as selling products like heroin on the over-the-counter market.⁽¹⁾

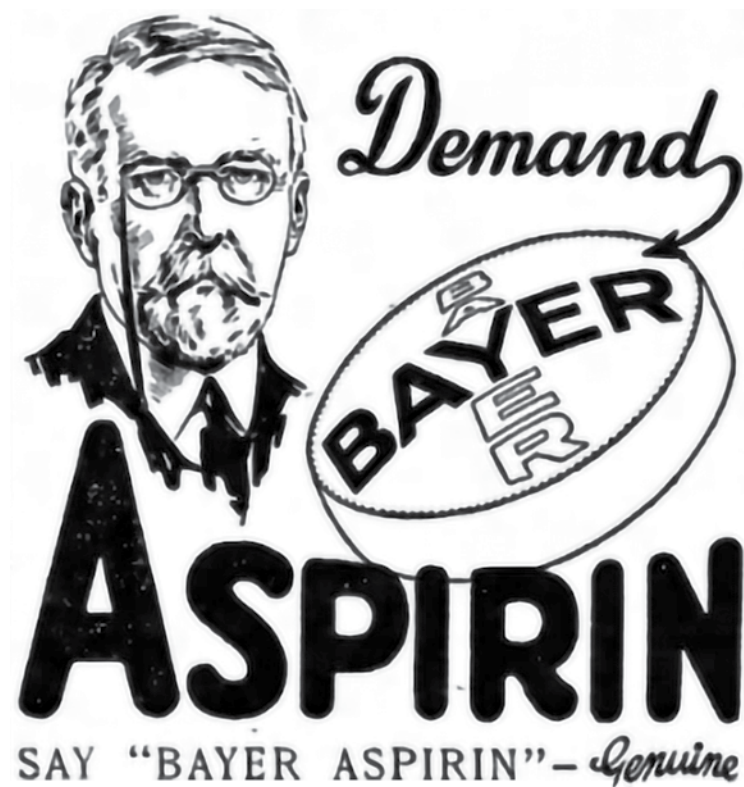


1940-Now

World War 2 sparked a new era for drugs. The increased need for certain medicines led to a much larger scale of production and manufacturing. Most of which were funded by government contracts. This is when the pharmaceutical industry started to become what we know as Big Pharma.

1849

In the USA, Pfizer was founded in 1849 by two German immigrants, initially as a fine chemicals business. Their business expanded rapidly during the American civil war as demand for painkillers and antiseptics rocketed. Whilst Pfizer was providing the medicines needed for the Union war effort, a young cavalry commander named Colonel Eli Lilly was serving in their army. A trained pharmaceutical chemist, Lilly was an archetype of the dynamic and multi-talented 19th century American industrialist, set up a pharmaceutical business in 1876. He was a pioneer of new methods in the industry, being one of the first to focus on R&D as well as manufacturing.⁽¹⁾



1918-1939

The period between 1918 and 1939 was marked by two breakthroughs that presaged the arrival of the pharmaceutical industry as we know it today. The first was insulin – Frederick Banting and colleagues managed to isolate insulin that could treat diabetes, up until that point a fatal condition. But it was only in collaboration with the scientists at Eli Lilly that they were able to sufficiently purify the extract and industrially produce and distribute it as an effective medicine. The second was penicillin, a discovery of an impact possibly unparalleled by any other in medicine, but we'll get to that in a bit.⁽¹⁾ World war two pushed the growing industry into an even larger scale operation. With having to produce more medicine for the soldiers.⁽¹⁾



Big Pharma.

(big `färmə) *Noun*

Major multinational pharmaceutical companies collectively as a sector of industry.

“big pharma remains the most profitable industry in America”

“
Penicillin was a triumph of accident,
a fortunate occurrence.

Alexander Flemings, creator



The Good.

One of the greatest things that came from Big Pharma “was a discovery of an impact possibly unparalleled by any other in medicine. After Alexander Fleming’s initial discovery of the penicillium mould’s antibiotic properties in 1928, and Howard Florey and Ernst Chain’s further experimentation, a government-supported international collaboration including Merck, Pfizer and Squibb worked on mass producing the drug during World War Two, saving thousands of soldiers’ lives. The immense scale and sophistication of the penicillin development effort marked a new era for the way the pharmaceutical industry developed drugs.”⁽¹⁾ There has been many other life changing breakthroughs that the industry has contributed to. I believe that most people who work in the industry are there to try and make the world a better place. It’s the people at the top running the business side of things that we should be worried about.



BIG Business

—
Price Hikes.
Profits Margins.

02

70%

OF AMERICANS

ARE ON PERSCRIPTION DRUGS



Americans spend an average of \$350 billion out of pocket a year on perscription drugs.

Price Hikes.

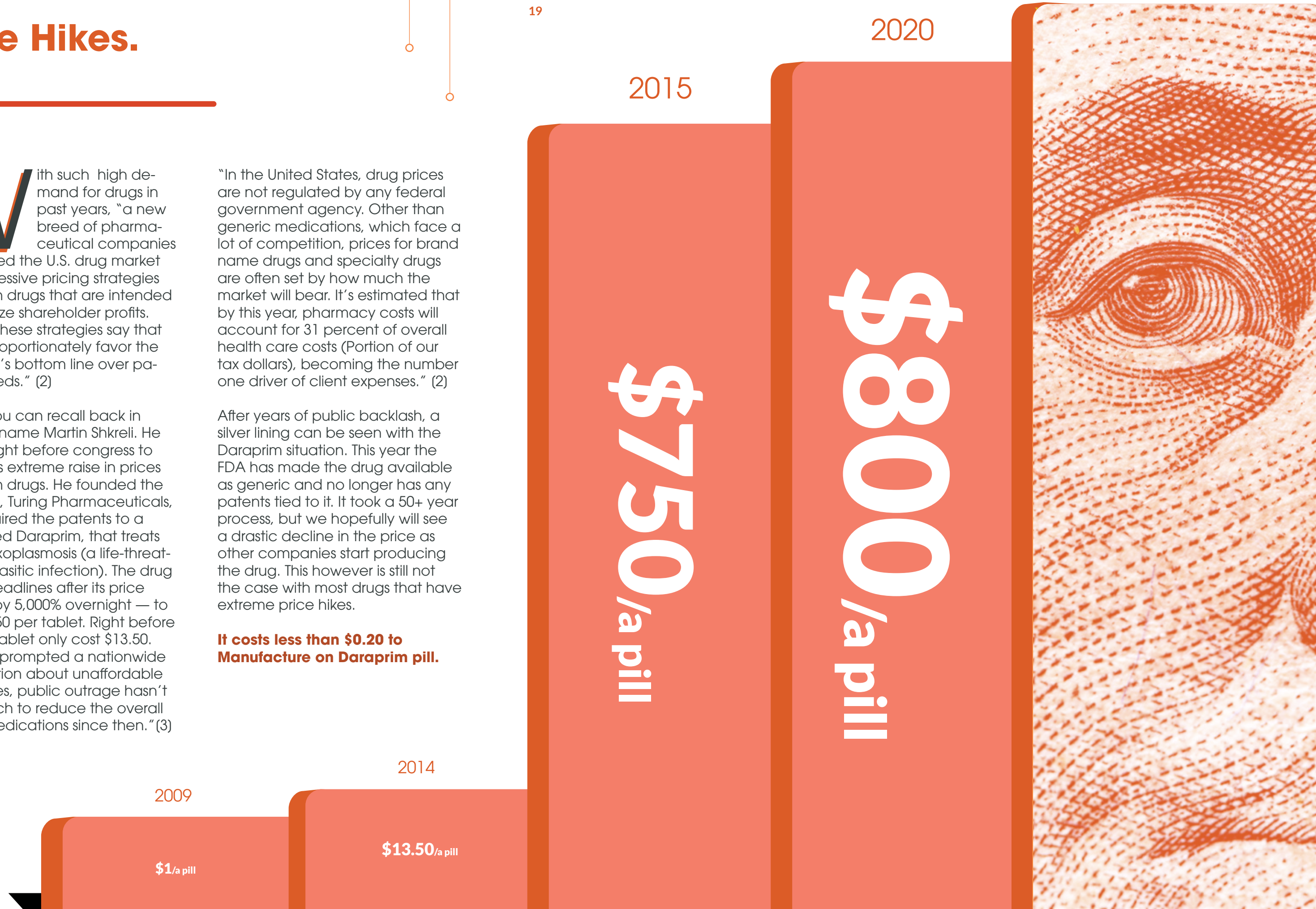
With such high demand for drugs in past years, “a new breed of pharmaceutical companies has entered the U.S. drug market with aggressive pricing strategies for certain drugs that are intended to maximize shareholder profits. Critics of these strategies say that they disproportionately favor the company’s bottom line over patients’ needs.” (2)

Maybe you can recall back in 2015, the name Martin Shkreli. He was brought before congress to explain his extreme raise in prices on certain drugs. He founded the company, Turing Pharmaceuticals, that acquired the patents to a drug called Daraprim, that treats severe toxoplasmosis (a life-threatening parasitic infection). The drug “made headlines after its price went up by 5,000% overnight — to about \$750 per tablet. Right before this, one tablet only cost \$13.50. While this prompted a nationwide conversation about unaffordable drug prices, public outrage hasn’t done much to reduce the overall cost of medications since then.” (3)

“In the United States, drug prices are not regulated by any federal government agency. Other than generic medications, which face a lot of competition, prices for brand name drugs and specialty drugs are often set by how much the market will bear. It’s estimated that by this year, pharmacy costs will account for 31 percent of overall health care costs (Portion of our tax dollars), becoming the number one driver of client expenses.” (2)

After years of public backlash, a silver lining can be seen with the Daraprim situation. This year the FDA has made the drug available as generic and no longer has any patents tied to it. It took a 50+ year process, but we hopefully will see a drastic decline in the price as other companies start producing the drug. This however is still not the case with most drugs that have extreme price hikes.

It costs less than \$0.20 to Manufacture on Daraprim pill.



2,000% Jump

Rodelis Therapeutics raised the price of a drug to treat multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis **from \$500 to over \$10,000** for the same number of pills.

57,500% Jump

Questcor bought the rights to Acthar Gel, which treats infantile spasms, a rare form of childhood epilepsy. Questcor raised the price of a vial **from \$40 to \$23,000**.

Here's a few others.

615% Jump

Valeant bought heart drug Isuprel and raised the price of a single vial from **\$440 to \$2,700**.

980% Jump

Valeant raised the price of Edecrin (a diuretic) from **\$470 in 2014 to \$4,600 in 2015**.

1,250% Jump

Valeant bought diabetes drug Glumetza and raised the price **from \$800 for a 90-day supply to over \$10,000**.

200% Jump

Mylan **doubled the price** of its famous and unanimous drug EpiPen.

“I think it will be huge.... So 5,000 paying bottles at the new price is \$375,000,000 – almost all of it is profit, and I think we will get 3 years of that or more. Should be a very handsome investment for all of us.

Martin Shkreli, Founder of Turning Pharmaceuticals
From a memo to investors in 2015

The worldwide pharmaceutical market was worth about \$1.3 trillion in 2019, according to market research cited by The Pharma Letter. “Working families and seniors are struggling to pay for the high cost of often life-saving medicines, and have been for years. But price gouging isn’t the only way big drug corporations rip off the American people. Congress needs to stop other abuses, too —starting with the drug industry’s rampant tax dodging.”⁽⁴⁾



2019 Profit Margins



BIG Politics

—

Tax Breaks.
The FDA.
Endorsing Congress.
Limited Accountability.

03



DON'T

PAY YOUR TAX NOW

Tax Breaks.

Growing up I was taught that you can't cheat Uncle Sam and the IRS when it comes to taxes. But Big Pharma has figured out how by scratching the backs of many members of Congress. Even though the industry makes big profits, they "don't pay their fair share of income taxes. The 2017 Trump-GOP tax law handed five of the Pharma Big 10 a collective tax cut of over \$8 billion in its first year alone, with more tax breaks coming every year. Separately, the Republican tax law wiped out an estimated \$70 billion of the U.S. tax bill drug corporations owed on half a trillion dollars in profits they stashed offshore."⁽⁴⁾ This is a mere glimpse of all the breaks the industry has gotten over the years. On top of that it is strikingly odd that the industry makes a killing off of government contracts that are completely tax free. They also get "tax breaks for all those irritating TV ads; even sales and tax benefits from the 'charities' they set up to help us pay for their overpriced products."⁽⁴⁾

“
Over the past decade, five of the Pharma Big 10 raked in a collective \$27 billion in U.S. government contracts.

Margarida Jorge and Frank Clemente, USA Today

Money buys power and Big Pharma buys the power that regulates the market, known as the FDA (Food and Drug Administration). According to Forbes "the pharmaceutical industry provides 75% of the FDA's drug review budget." ⁽⁵⁾ On top of that they provide personal kickbacks to the agency's top drug reviewers to speed up the approval of certain drugs and or slow the process down for the competition. "An analysis of pharma payments to 107 physicians who advised FDA on 28 drugs approved from 2008 to 2014 found that a majority later got money for travel or consulting, or received research subsidies from the makers of the drugs on which they voted or from competing firms."^(5.1) They also have the power to stop the approval of promising drugs that could be disruptive to the market. Another power Big Pharma buys is members of congress, mostly the ones that make the laws surrounding the market.



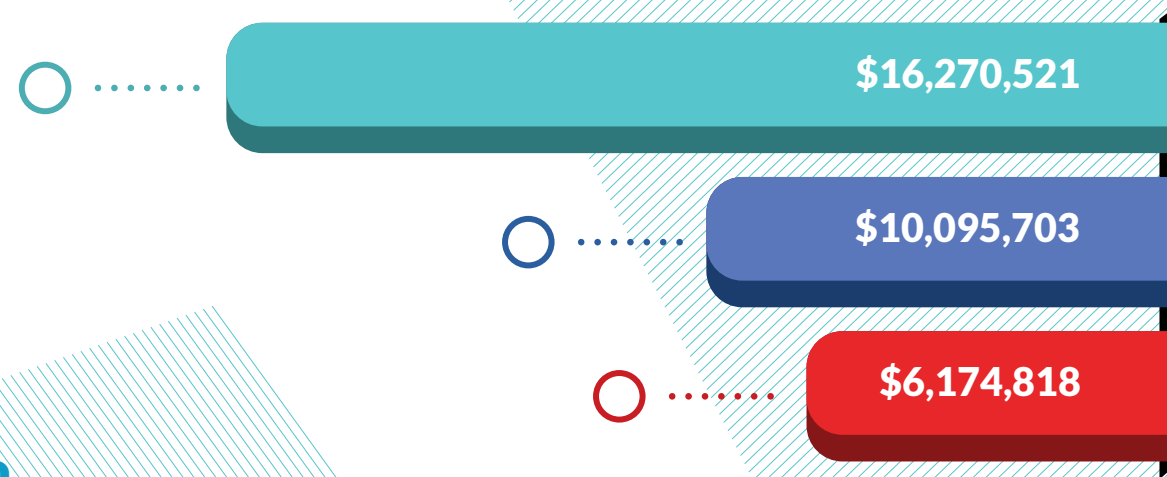
The

FDA

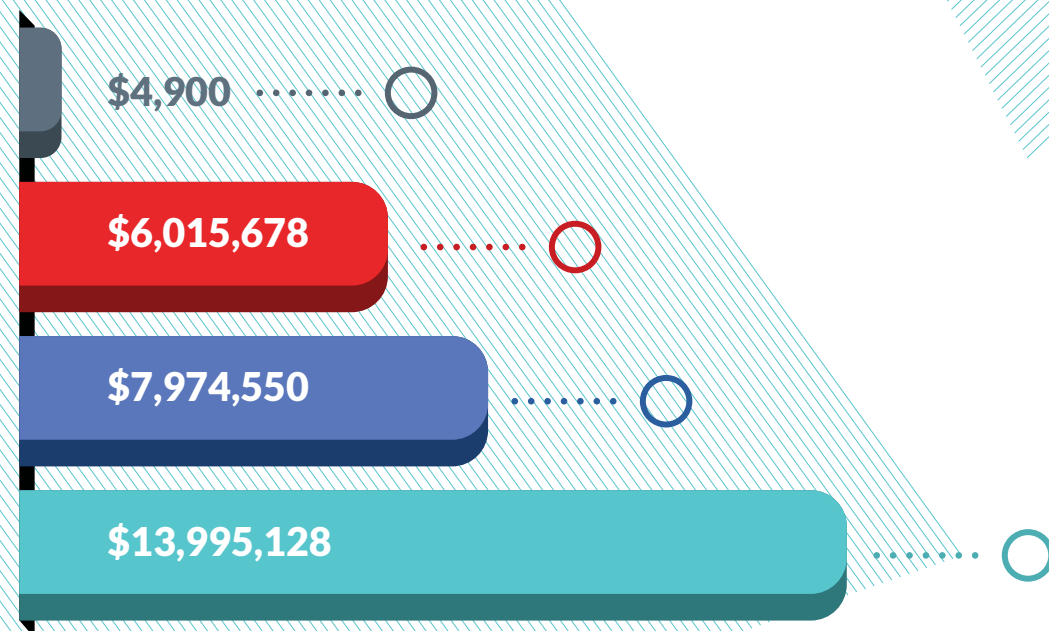
“
An analysis of pharma payments to 107 physicians who advised FDA on 28 drugs approved from 2008 to 2014 found that a majority later got money... from the makers of the drugs on which they voted or from competing firms.

Charles Piller, Jia You- ScienceMag.org

2016 Election



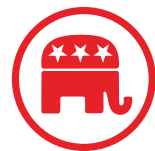
2020 Election



Independant



Democrat



Republican



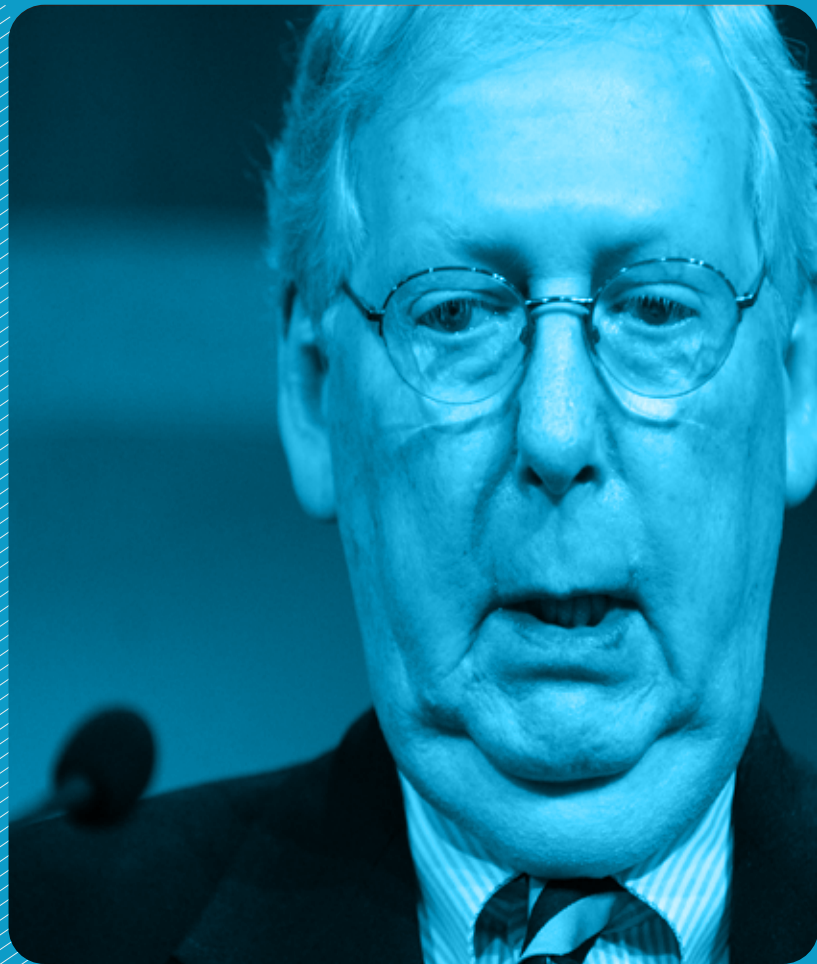
Total

According to the Federal Election Commission.



Endorsing Congress.

From “1999 to 2018, the pharmaceutical and health product industry spent \$4.7 billion, an average of \$233 million per year, on lobbying the US federal government; \$414 million on contributions to presidential and congressional electoral candidates, national party committees, and outside spending groups; and \$877 million on contributions to state candidates and committees. Contributions were targeted at senior legislators in Congress involved in drafting health care laws and state committees that opposed or supported key referenda on drug pricing and regulation.”⁽⁵⁾



2020's Top Recipients



“The companies allegedly downplayed the serious health risks associated with (the drug) – including the risk of stroke in elderly patients – and even paid doctors to induce them to prescribe the drugs.

David Callahan, Demos.org

Limited Accountability.

In 2012 “a \$3 billion settlement against GlaxoSmithKline for improper marketing prescription drugs in the late 1990s to the mid-2000s. It may sound like a lot of money, but really is just a drop in the bucket for Big Pharma.”⁽⁶⁾ They were fined for the misbranding of the drugs Paxil and Wellbutrin and failure to disclose safety information about the diabetes drug Avandia. “But during these years GSK made \$27.5 billion on the three drugs alone.”⁽⁶⁾



Another case like this was in 2013 when Johnson & Johnson had to pay a total of \$2.2 billion in fines. They had apparently “had pushed doctors to prescribe an anti-psychotic drug, Risperdal, in ways never approved by the FDA.”⁽⁷⁾ They would incentivize the doctors who prescribed most patients with trips, sports tickets, money, and other things. “Johnson & Johnson is just one of many companies that has been found to repeatedly break the law. Most of the big drugmakers have the same rap sheet. All told, the report found 303 settlements over the past 24 years with total penalties of nearly \$30 billion.”⁽⁷⁾ For the multi-trillion dollar industry these malpractices are just another expenditure in doing business, even if it costs someone’s life.



BIG Corruption

— **04**
Mistrials and Death.
The Opioid Crisis.
An Alternative.
Blocked Treatments.

Mistrials & Death.

Jeanne Lenzer, ncbi.gov

Officials in Nigeria have filed criminal and civil charges against Pfizer for its role in the deaths and disabilities of children who were treated with an experimental drug.

”

In 1996 “Pfizer was sued after 11 children died in a clinical trial when the northern state of Kano was hit by Africa’s worst ever meningitis epidemic. A hundred children were given an experimental oral antibiotic called Trovan, while a further hundred received ceftriaxone. Five children died on Trovan and six on ceftriaxone. But later it was claimed that Pfizer did not have proper consent from parents to use an experimental drug on their children and questions were raised over the documentation of the trial.”⁽⁸⁾ Many of the children that didn’t die were left with paralysis, slurred speech, and brain damage. Pfizer ultimately admitted to no wrongdoing but did compensate a few of the families that were affected after submitting a DNA sample. The Nigerian government was given \$75 million to settle the matter. The information wasn’t made public until leaked in 2006. Companies of the industry will typically do most experimental trails outside the United States for multiple reasons, mainly it’s cheaper and there aren’t nearly as many laws and regulations.





Opioid Crisis.

What is the opioid crisis? It's "the overuse or misuse of addictive opioid drugs with significant medical, social and economic consequences, including overdose deaths."⁽⁹⁾ It all started in 1999 when Purdue Pharma came out with OxyContin. If you were looking at the drug from a molecular level, you'd see that it and heroin are essentially the same. The powerful addiction that follows using is also the same. So when the drug first came out there was a huge influx of abuse that led to hundreds of thousands of deaths. Now on average there are over 50,000 deaths a year in the directly linked to opioids. Studies show "80% of people who used heroin first misused prescription opioids."⁽¹⁰⁾

This Oxy is the same as a spoonful of heroin.



DEA Database Shows Drug Manufacturers Contributed Most To The Opioid Epidemic

AddictionCenter.org



Remember how we talked about doctors being incentivized when they promote certain drugs for pharma companies. Well this happened quite a bit with OxyCotin and caused the “pill mill” era to arise. Basically some doctors took advantage of the huge amounts of people and money the drug drew in and basically turned into glorified drug dealers. They would have people come to their clinic, pay a fee and they got a script. In turn they made a profit from the patient for the visit and in addition to that a kick back from the pharma company. It’s a win win situation. The saddest part of it is when someone who visited a doctor like this was given a high dose prescription of opioids when they only needed to take a Tylenol and had no intention of taking something so strong. In these cases patients have been seen to overdose or get hooked to the addictive nature of the pill. Opioids have done much more harm than good and yet they still dominate the pharma market.



An Alternative.

Joseph Misulonas, *Civilized Life*

Big Pharma stands to Lose
\$4 Billion Per Year Due to
Medical Marijuana

”



According to the University of Berkeley and HelloMD, “Prescription drug overdoses are the leading cause of accidental death in the United States. Alternatives to opioids for the treatment of pain are necessary to address this issue. Cannabis can be an effective treatment for pain, greatly reduces the chance of dependence, and eliminates the risk of fatal overdose compared to opioid-based medications. Medical cannabis patients report that cannabis is just as effective, if not more, than opioid-based medications for pain.” (12)

In the last few years many states have legalized cannabis for medicinal use and according to the study by the two groups, 81% of 2897 cannabis buyers used it as a substitute to using prescription opioids for pain relief. Cannabis can treat a variety of diseases, some of which are “anxiety, chronic pain, epilepsy, post-traumatic stress disorder, sleep disorders, nerve pain, chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting, Tourette syndrome and glaucoma.” (12.2) It’s no wonder Big Pharma spends hundreds of millions a year against the legalization of the treatment.



Blocked Treatments.

The reason pharma companies can price gouge the drugs they manufacture is the same reason they are preventing better alternatives to some medicines from being made. It all lies in the patent process. Basically the drug industry and the FDA have devised a system of what can and can not be patented or manufactured. So ultimately potential lifesaving treatments can not be legally manufactured because another company might own the rights or partial rights to a drug or how it is made. And some drug makers who own the rights to the more promising alternatives won't pursue them because they wouldn't make as much as having someone stay sick with multiple treatments of another form of medicine that is already being manufactured and sold.

Austin Frakt, *New York Times*

Patent Law Can Block Even
Lifesaving Drugs

”

BIG Ideas

An Idea.
Conclusion.

05

An Idea.

A promising campaign I found that is taking a stand against the wrongs of the pharma industry is Lower Drug Prices Now. On their site it states, “whether it’s a sore throat, diabetes, asthma or cancer, we all deserve affordable prescription medicines to feel better when we’re sick. It’s time to stop drug corporations from putting their profits ahead of our families and our health. Together, we can end big Pharma’s price-gouging, and rewrite the rules so everyone can afford the medicines they need to care for themselves and their families.” (14) What is interesting about their site is they give suggestions of what you can do as an individual. You can check them out at lowerdrugpricesnow.org.

“

Affordable medicines for all — no matter where you live, what you look like or what’s in your wallet.

lowerdrugpricesnow.org

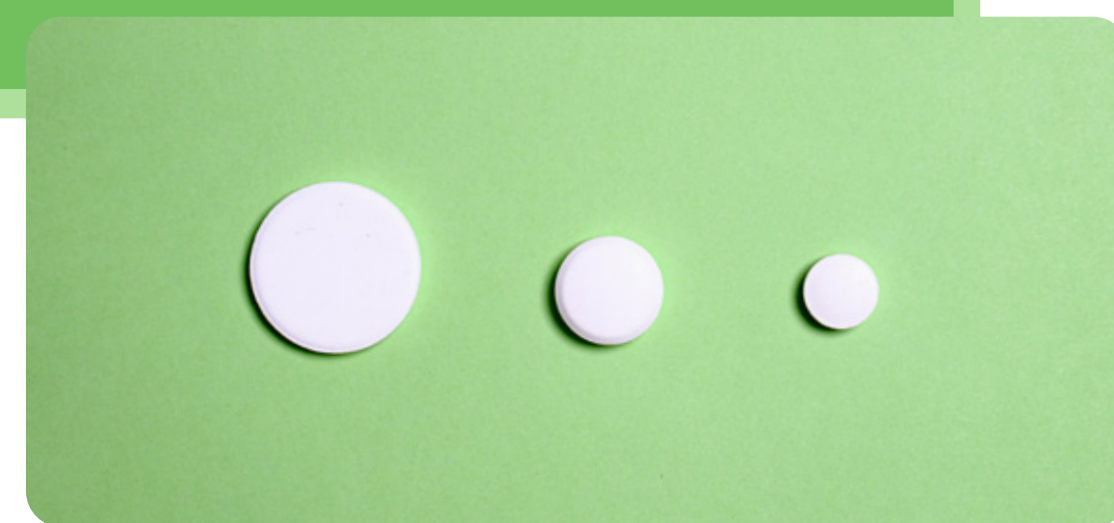


**LOWER
DRUG
PRICES
NOW**



Conclusion.

In my research I've found that the pharmaceutical industry has saved millions of lives over the past century. They have contributed to monumental advancements in modern medicine and technology. The door has been opened for many afflicted individuals to live normal lives. But taking a look past all of the good you'll see that the industry has done some terrible things such as price gouging essential drugs to starting an opioid epidemic that has become a leading cause of death in America. My conclusion is that big pharma is mostly a big hoax that takes advantage of any opportunity to grow their wallets, even if it means you have to get a second mortgage on your house to pay for your medication. They're a necessary evil, mostly evil.



“

Big Money. Big Corruption. Big Pharma.
But most of all just a Big Hoax.

Zac Terry

WE LOVE

Legal

DRUGS

(1) <https://sixdegreesmed.com/history-pharmaceutical-industry/>

(2) <https://magazine.wharton.upenn.edu/digital/an-end-to-overpricing-what-big-pharma-price-hikes-mean-for-health-care/>

(3) <https://www.goodrx.com/blog/fda-approves-daraprim-generic-pyrimethamine/>

(4) <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2019/12/16/high-prices-low-taxes-and-other-drug-company-ripoffs-column/4408143002/>

(5) <https://www.forbes.com/sites/johnlamattina/2018/06/28/the-biopharmaceutical-industry-provides-75-of-the-fdas-drug-review-budget-is-this-a-problem/?sh=792ca0c949ec>

(5.1) <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2018/07/hidden-conflicts-pharma-payments-fda-advisers-after-drug-approvals-spark-ethical>

(5.2) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7054854/#:~:text=This%20observational%20study%2C%20which%20analyzed,%24414%20million%20on%20contributions%20to>

(6) <https://www.csmonitor.com/Business/Robert-Reich/2012/0705/Big-Pharma-s-3-billion-slap-on-the-wrist>

(7) <https://www.demos.org/blog/why-big-pharma-wont-stop-breaking-law>

(8) [https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/aug/11/pfizer-nigeria-meningitis-drug-compensation#:~:text=The%20parents%20of%20four%20Nigerian,%2C%A3108%2C000\)%20to%20each%20family.](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/aug/11/pfizer-nigeria-meningitis-drug-compensation#:~:text=The%20parents%20of%20four%20Nigerian,%2C%A3108%2C000)%20to%20each%20family.)

(8.1) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1889962/>

(9) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opioid_epidemic

(10) Carlson RG, Nahhas RW, Martins SS, Daniulaityte R. Predictors of transition to heroin use among initially non-opioid dependent illicit pharmaceutical opioid users: A natural history study. *Drug Alcohol Depend.* 2016;160:127-134. doi:10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2015.12.026.

(11) <https://www.addictioncenter.com/news/2019/08/generic-drug-manufacturers-opioid-epidemic/>

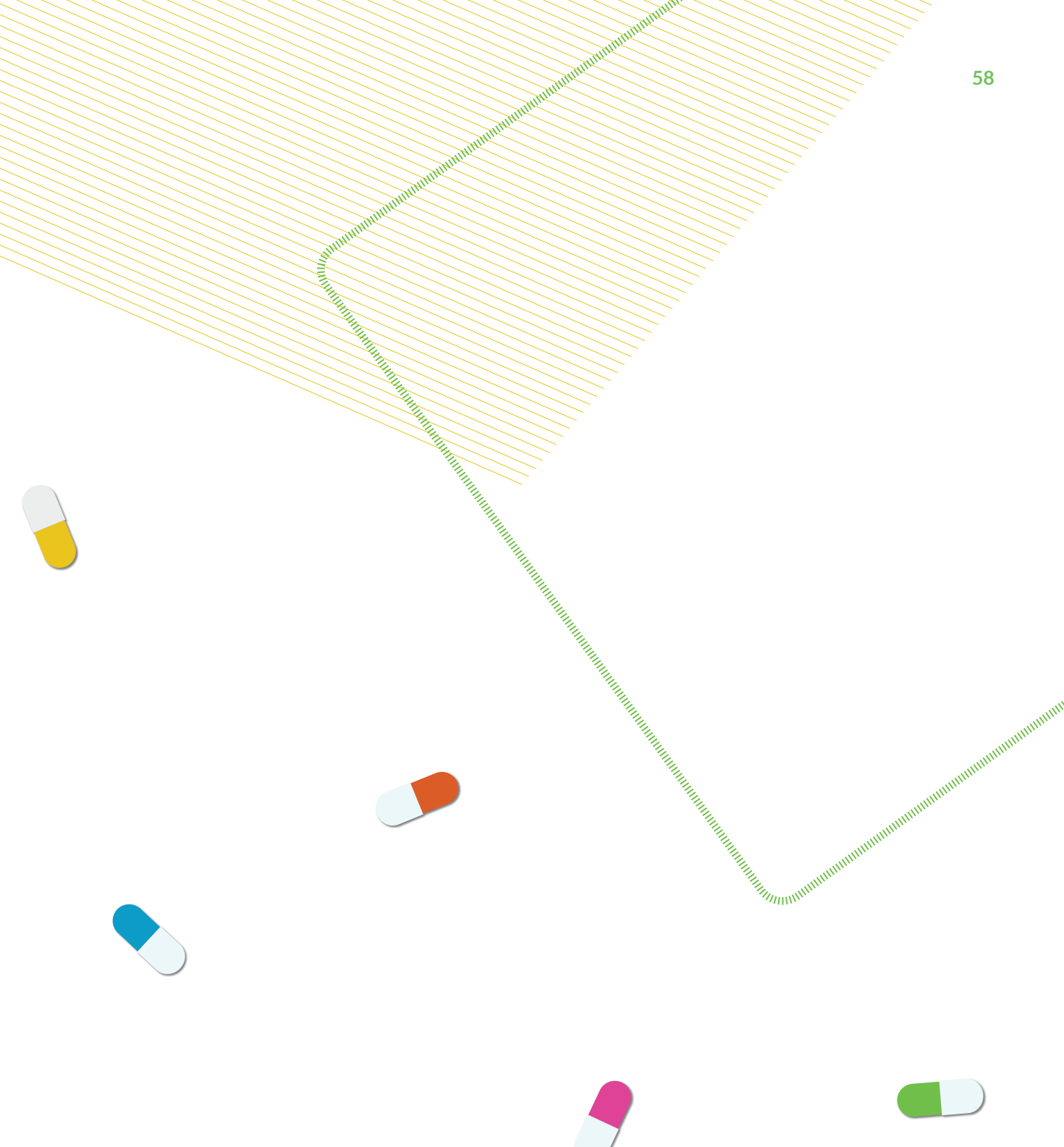
(12) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5569620/>

(12.1) <https://www.civilized.life/articles/big-pharma-lose-billions-medical-marijuana/>

(12.2) <https://www.civilized.life/articles/big-pharma-lose-billions-medical-marijuana/>

(13) <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/29/upshot/how-patent-law-can-block-even-lifesaving-drugs.html>

(14) <https://www.lowerdrugpricesnow.org/>

A decorative graphic in the top right corner of the page. It features a series of thin, parallel lines in yellow and green that curve and zig-zag across the space. Scattered throughout this area are several colorful pills: a yellow and white pill, a blue and white pill, a pink and white pill, a green and white pill, and a red and white pill.

**Thank you
to my family
& all of those who
have supported me.**

BIG

BIG

BIG

Money.

Corruption.

Pharma.

The BIG pharmaceutical industry seems to be a necessary evil to some, and just plain evil to others. This is how a concept of good has turned into one of the worlds most powerful and corrupt industries.

 US 9.99 CAN 12.99



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WARNING

Do not operate or drive machinery while under the influence of this zine.