

## ***Bad Blood: A Cautionary Tale***

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The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) has disproportionately affected the gay community and victims of hemophilia, a rare bleeding disorder. For more than a decade in the 1960s, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) turned the other cheek on drug regulation and allowed pharmaceutical industries to control manufacturing processes. This approach led to violations of safety standards, as pharmaceutical companies became increasingly concerned with enormous profits and less about oversight. When AIDS emerged in the 1980s, over 10,000 people with hemophilia were infected with HIV and hepatitis after receiving FDA-approved medical treatment. This hemophilia treatment contained factor of active ingredients made from large pools of plasma of up to 60,000 donations, but only one HIV-infected donation was all it took to contaminate the entire supply.

*Bad Blood: A Cautionary Tale* is a documentary highlighting the tragic historical facts of HIV detection in the U.S. blood supply and the aftermath of societal demands to correct the situation. The film portrays survivors and their family members showing that effects of deregulation are still felt by innocent members of our society. Furthermore, it exposes evidence that pharmaceutical companies and government regulators were aware of the viral contamination and were slow to respond to emergency warnings from the Center for Disease Control. The cautionary tale presents two bioethical issues: government's awareness of contaminated blood donations and the pharmaceutical industry's concern for prioritizing profit over safety. When the government chose to deregulate the pharmaceutical companies, it handed out thousands of death certificates. The film reveals the early years of blood processing as unsanitary, by depicting improper screening during donations from the homeless and sick. To make matters worse, the government and medical professionals were already aware hepatitis contaminated the factor. However, they continuously ignored it, believing the viral infections were mostly harmless and the societal benefit greatly outweighed the minimal risk. Once these wrongdoings came to light, many companies responded by shipping the contaminated products out of the country, to continue making profits.

Although, we hope that with today's standards government regulators do not repeat such oversight mistakes, many pharmaceutical companies are private enterprises. And thus, it is up to us, to push pharmaceutical manufacturers to listen to consumers and implement extensive safety measures when screening plasma products. Although, there haven't been any known cases of transmitted HIV or hepatitis for at least 20 years, fear of recurrence is well founded. The four personal stories at the center of the film are what really capture the viewer. Each character's struggle is depicted as a heartfelt journey described through interviews, narration, photographs, media coverage, and animations. You can feel the pain behind the idea of being infected with a deadly ailment by the very people you seek for help.