

THE *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLER

Blind Eye

THE TERRIFYING
STORY OF A
DOCTOR WHO
GOT AWAY
WITH MURDER

UPDATED BY
THE AUTHOR

James
B. Stewart

"Chillingly thorough. . . . Wonderfully done. . . .
An elaborate journalistic reconstruction that
has the fascination of an acutely observed
and troubling novel." —Lance Morrow,
The New York Times Book Review

AUTHOR OF *DEN OF THIEVES* AND WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE

Praise for *Blind Eye*

“*Blind Eye* is a remarkable piece of reporting.”—Scott McLemee, *Newsday*

“Swango’s odyssey is so compelling that I became riveted. I needed to know when and how he would be caught, and what ultimately happened to him.”—Dr. Robert B. Daroff, *The Plain Dealer* (Cleveland)

“Stewart has produced an extraordinary book.”—Steve Twedt, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

“James B. Stewart’s *Blind Eye* is a persuasive case against Dr. Michael Swango.”—R. Z. Sheppard, *Time* magazine

“The facts gathered by Stewart are compelling. [He] . . . persuasively dissects the medical establishment.”—Steve Weinberg, *Chicago Tribune*

“Is *Blind Eye* worth reading? Yes, Jim Stewart’s books always are.”—Joseph Nocera, *Fortune*

“Stewart tells a story that both grips and enrages . . . Throughout *Blind Eye*, [he] shows how the medical establishment took the path of least resistance when it came to Swango. They didn’t want to know.”—Ray Locker, *The Tampa Tribune*

“If Swango is guilty—and author James B. Stewart builds a persuasive case against him—Stewart also makes a strong argument that he must share responsibility with a medical establishment that let him move freely from state to state, from hospital to hospital, without warning or punishment.”—Dale Singer, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*

“Best-selling author Stewart brings us inside the life of a killer who thrived in a medical establishment where doctors typically cover up for other doctors, where hospital administrators live in constant fear of litigation, and where regulatory agencies don’t share crucial information . . . Stewart writes skillfully.”—*Kirkus Reviews*

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Michael Swango, M.D.

MURIEL SWANGO, his mother

JOHN VIRGIL SWANGO, his father

ROBERT SWANGO, his brother

JOHN SWANGO, his brother

RICHARD KERKERING, his half brother

RUTH MILLER, his aunt

LOUISE SCHARF, his aunt

At Southern Illinois University

JAMES ROSENTHAL, medical student

KEVIN SWEENEY, medical student

DAVID CHAPMAN, medical student

DR. MARK ZAWODNIAK, medical resident

DR. KATHLEEN O'CONNOR, medical resident

DR. JOHN MURPHY, PROFESSOR OF pathology and toxicology

DR. LYLE WACASER, part-time professor of neurosurgery

DR. WILLIAM RODDICK, chairman, department of obstetrics and gynecology

RICHARD MOY, dean of the School of Medicine

At Ohio State University

EDWARD JENNINGS, president

DR. MANUEL TZAGOURNIS, university vice president, health services, and dean of
the College of Medicine

RICHARD JACKSON, university vice president, business and finance

DR. MICHAEL WHITCOMB, medical director, Ohio State University Hospitals

DR. LARRY CAREY, chief, department of surgery
DR. WILLIAM HUNT, director, department of neurosurgery
DR. JOSEPH GOODMAN, professor of neurosurgery
DR. REES FREEMAN, chief resident, neurosurgery
DONALD CRAMP, executive director, Ohio State University Hospitals
DONALD BOYANOWSKI, associate executive director, business and finance
CHARLES GAMBS, assistant vice president, university public safety
JAN DICKSON, R.N., associate executive director/nursing
AMY MOORE, R.N., head nurse
ANNE RITCHIE, R.N.
RITA DUMAS, R.N.
KAROLYN TYRRELL BEERY, student nurse
JOE RLSLEY, nurse's aide
IWONIA UTZ, patient
RENA COOPER, patient

ROBERT HOLDER, associate attorney general, State of Ohio
ALPHONSE CINCIONE, partner, Butler, Cincione, DiCuccio, and Barnhart

In Quincy, Illinois

MARK KRZYSTOFczyk, paramedic
GREG MYERS, paramedic
BRENT UNMISIG, paramedic
LONNIE LONG, chief paramedic
DENNIS CASHMAN, judge, Eighth Judicial Circuit
CHET VAHLE, assistant state's attorney, Adams County
ROBERT NALL, sheriff
CHARLES GRUBER, chief of police
WAYNE JOHNSON, coroner
DAN COOK, attorney

In Columbus, Ohio

MICHAEL MILLER, prosecuting attorney, Franklin County
EDWARD MORGAN, assistant prosecuting attorney

PETER HERDT, chief of police, Ohio State University
BRUCE ANDERSON, police officer
RICHARD HARP, police officer
CHARLES ELEY, investigator, Ohio State Medical Board
JAMES MEEKS, dean of the College of Law, Ohio State University

In Newport News, Virginia

KRISTIN KINNEY, R.N.
SHARON COOPER, her mother
AL COOPER, her stepfather

In Sioux Falls, South Dakota

DR. ROBERT TALLEY, dean of the University of South Dakota School of
Medicine
DR. ANTHONY SALEM, professor of internal medicine and director of the
residency program
LISA FLINN, R.N.
VERN COOK, hospital administrator

At the State University of New York-Stony Brook, Long Island

DR. JORDAN COHEN, dean of the School of Medicine
DR. ALAN MILLER, professor of psychiatry, director of the psychiatric residency
program
BARRON HARRIS, patient
ELSIE HARRIS, his wife
DOMINIC BUFFALINO, patient
TERESA BUFFALINO, his wife

In the Republic of Zimbabwe

HOWARD MPOFU, director of hospitals, Evangelical Lutheran church
DR. DAVIS DHLAKAMA, medical director, Midlands province

DR. NABOTH CHAIBVA, superintendent, Mpilo Hospital, Bulawayo

DR. IAN LORIMER, resident

DR. CHRISTOPHER ZSHIRI, director, Mnene Mission Hospital

KENEAS MZEZEWA, patient

VIRGINIA SIBANDA, patient

P. C. CHAKARISA, superintendent, Zimbabwe Republic police

DAVID COLTART, attorney, Webb, Low & Barry, Bulawayo

LYNETTE O'HARE, landlady

MARY CHIMWE, her servant

ELIZABETH KEREDO, her servant

JOANNA DALY, housewife

I observe the physician with the same diligence as he the disease.

—JOHN DONNE (1572–1631)

PROLOGUE

KENEAS MZEZEWA had dozed off for a nap that May afternoon, but was awakened at about two P.M. when he felt someone removing his loose-fitting pajama trousers. He lifted his head, still a bit groggy from sleep, and saw that it was Dr. Mike. The handsome American doctor had a syringe in his hand, and seemed about to give him an injection, so Mzezewa, eager to help, pulled down his trousers and turned on his side. Then the doctor plunged the unusually large needle into his right buttock. Mzezewa saw that after he finished the injection, the doctor concealed the used syringe in the pocket of his white medical coat.

“Good-bye,” Dr. Mike said softly, pausing briefly to look back at Mzezewa.

Then he left the hospital ward.

HOWARD MPOFU, the director of hospitals for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, liked the new doctor the minute he met him, in November 1994, when he picked him up at the Bulawayo city airport. Michael Swango looked like the American athletes Mpofu had seen on television. He was blond and blue-eyed, taller than Mpofu, with a ready smile. According to the résumé the church had received, he was forty years old, but he looked younger. Mpofu tried to help Swango with his duffel bags, but the doctor wouldn't hear of it. He quickly hoisted the heavy bags and insisted on carrying them to the car himself.

On the ride into the city, Swango was garrulous, flushed with excitement at his new assignment. Mpofu asked why Swango had wanted to come to Zimbabwe to take up a post that would pay him a small fraction of what he could earn in the United States. After all, Swango was an honor student; he'd graduated from an American medical school and had completed an internship at the prestigious Ohio State University Hospitals, which meant he could go anywhere. “All my life,” Swango told him, “I have dreamed of helping the poor and the disadvantaged.” He said America had plenty of doctors, but in