



# Surgeon Meets Malpractice Attorney

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PR9.NET December 12, 2006 - Boston, USA - What do you get if you cross an medical malpractice attorney with a surgeon?

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One surgeon, whose wife committed suicide because she was hounded by a medical malpractice attorney, decides to fight back. He's committed to reintroducing justice into the system—but his own kind of justice, administered in his own way.

Malpractice attorneys begin to turn up dead. Each one is uniquely executed—and surgically altered in bizarre and disturbing ways. There are no fingerprints and no blood. Few clues are left behind. Usable evidence is sparse. And the killer, as he contemplates what he's accomplished, silently dedicates each murder to the memory of his beloved wife. The police detective assigned to this case, Septimus "Mac" McClymonds, soon confirms that he is in a battle of wits with a most unusual and highly intelligent serial killer.

Scalpel is a tongue-in-cheek look at the world of medical malpractice and how it affects physicians. Interestingly, Scalpel's author is Dr. Berman, a distinguished physician who serves as chief of surgery at his hospital, a director of a Center for Breast Care, and an Associate Professor of Surgery at USC Medical Center.

Dr. Berman says, "Being sued, whether reasonably or not, often creates the most stressful time in a doctor's professional life. A looming medical malpractice case is always fraught with anger, depression, self-righteous indignation, and unfortunately in a few cases, suicide." He explains that, in a profession where anything less than perfection is seen by the public as failure, most physicians maintain a very high standard of practice. And when, as human beings are apt to do, they commit errors of judgment, omission or commission, they are devastated when assaulted by the seemingly unfeeling malpractice attorneys. "A doctor who is sued by a malpractice attorney can no longer look upon the ninety-nine patients who do well, but only on the one who has had a problem," he shares. In addition, looming over the physician's head is the ever increasing cost of his or her malpractice insurance. There are many physicians who have to quit their profession because they could no longer afford the insurance rates. In Dr. Berman's opinion, the responsibility lies not solely with the attorneys, but also with the litigious society they have nurtured and the public who feel that anything less than perfection should be financially compensated.

So does Dr. Berman have any sympathy for the homicidal surgeon in Scalpel? "None whatsoever," Dr. Berman claims. But he admits that, as a novelist, he had a wonderful time exploring the possibilities of a hyperbole reaction of one particular doctor who "goes off the deep end," perhaps a reflection of the transient evil thoughts of most doctors when they receive a lawyer's letter of intent to file suit for medical malpractice.

And, Berman emphasizes, those evil thoughts are fleeting. He doesn't hold any long-term grudges against lawyers. In fact, he counts many among his friends and has found that they share his sense of humor. "I'd even be willing to give my attorney friends copies of Scalpel for the holidays. Nothing says friendship more than allowing attorneys to poke fun at themselves – and, not so incidentally, letting physicians join in on the fun"

Scalpel  
By Dr. Joel Berman  
Juniper Springs Press  
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<http://www.doctorjoelberman.com>

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**Phone:** 781-986-0732  
**Website:** <http://www.bookpromotiontools.com>  
**E-Mail:** [bookpromotiontools@gmail.com](mailto:bookpromotiontools@gmail.com)  
**Address:** Randolph, MA

