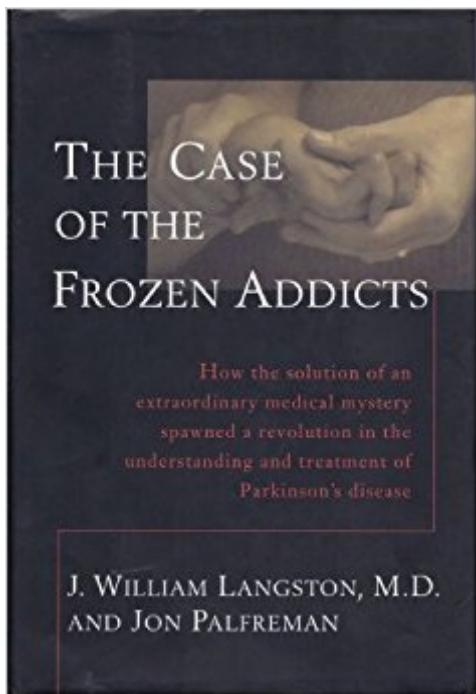


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# The Case Of The Frozen Addicts



## **Synopsis**

In this riveting book, neurosurgeon J. William Langston and writer Jon Palfreman recount the bizarre and far-reaching mystery of six patients who arrived at San Francisco area emergency rooms after using a synthetic analogue of heroin. Fully conscious but unable to move or speak, they were soon diagnosed by Langston as having advanced Parkinson's disease. This spellbinding book offers a stunning report on these baffling cases. From the Trade Paperback edition.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

In 1982, six patients appeared in California clinics displaying mysterious symptoms: their bodies were so stiff that they appeared to be frozen. Langston, currently the president of the California Parkinson's Foundation, was one of the first physicians to examine the patients. He discovered that they had all injected a "designer" drug into their systems that created symptoms similar to Parkinson's disease. Through excellent detective work and a good deal of pure luck, Langston located the chemical MPTP, which also produced Parkinsonian symptoms in primates. That discovery was of supreme medical importance, providing Langston and other researchers with the ability to test Parkinson's treatments on animal models. New approaches, including fetal tissue transplantation, could now be pursued. Langston's book intersperses discussions of recent research on Parkinson's while continuing to report on the progress of the "frozen addicts." A fast-paced medical detective format makes this a fascinating and immensely informative work. Highly recommended for most libraries. Tina Neville, Univ. of South Florida at St. Petersburg Lib. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

The fascinating story of 12 years in Langston's career takes him from clinician to organizer of the Parkinson's Institute in California. In the process and with the aid of his growing staff and several Swedish physicians, he "thawed out" George, Juanita, and Connie, three of six addicts he'd been called to see in 1982. The six had suddenly shown signs of advanced Parkinson's disease that included inflexible or "frozen" bodies and inability to communicate. An alert and imaginative neurologist, Langston eventually suspected a chemical cause because of indications that all six were addicted to heroin or had used at least some just before the onset of symptoms. Ultimately, Langston unlocked his patients to the point at which a long and tortuous medical detective story could begin. The happy conclusion for the successfully thawed three came after the use of various experimental drugs and the transplanting of, first, adrenal, and finally, fetal, tissues. Readers of many stripes should find this well-told tale exciting. William Beatty

I first discovered the story concerning these 6 frozen junkies when reading the book by Jimmy Moore and Eric C. Westman, MD.: "Cholesterol Clarity" and then immediately ordered a copy. And I must admit that it has been a highly interesting and easy read book, even though it's concerning neuro science, as it to me many times was like reading a good detective novel, so exciting that it was hard to put it down. A detective work by searching and actually many times by accidents were getting the best connections for the continuing following a trail. It's interesting in the book to read how many of the doctors whom the frozen patients first met, also the Danish chemical person we meet on the side 76, diagnosed them as cases of mental illness, actually the catatonic schizophrenia, neurogenic motor immobility and behavioral abnormality, and then just were expecting that it would turn over with time. And opposite to this how Langston concluded it to be Parkinson's cases, after George Carillo was brought to the hospital, and there, among other, when laying on the bed, and having the arms were lifted up, it took 3 to 4 minutes before they had returned down to Georges side. And how Langston then was told the story from George Carillo, when after 12 days George got free from his body, by getting the L-dopa drug. The story about how he during all of the time had been totally clear in his brain and recognizing anything that was going on around him, but couldn't talk, scream, move a finger, or not even an eyebrow, when feeling awful while doctors were doing painful or awful smelling stuffs against him for "waking him up. After George Carillo on July 16, 1982, ended in the Clara Valley Medical Center, California, and they there had concluded that he must have been hit by something in street bought heroin, and Langston then went to the news, for warning, fist 5 parallel

persons are discovered, and brought in, but later on also previous historical shows up. The first of the earlier cases turn out to be about Barry in the twenties, who in 1976 after maybe not using a clean glass when making his heroin, ended at NIH Clinical Center after also first having been diagnosed as hit by catatonic schizophrenia. And we read about the research which there were made to find which chemical processes that were going on in his body and resulting in thus being hit by the hardest case of the Parkinson's disease in such a short time. When Barry died 18 month later his brain showed up extensive cell loss in an area of the brain, which normally the case for the Parkinson's patient. But after Langston and his companions then in 1983 got an article in the Science, there first came a letter from a Dr. Naokata Yokoyama in Japan, now recognizing that he probably had been hit by Parkinson's disease as result on his chemical work with MPTP back in 1964 to 1972. So he was called to USA for parallel research control as the 6 frozen addicts had been through. And then in Denmark a woman recognized that her husband Henning Nielsen, shortly after they had been divorced, suddenly had been frozen in the same way shortly before Christmas 1975, and then was brought to the Copenhagen Hospital 200 miles away. There he also first was diagnosed as being hit by catatonic schizophrenia, but another psychiatrist, the Dr. Welner, did not agree, and discovered that Henning could communicate via wrinkling of the eyebrows, and then he was send to the neurological ward. And it's interesting to read how the 2 neurologists are making much work in finding the solution for what have caused his Parkinsonism. Nielsen had only during 2 weeks in the chemical firm Ferrosan A/S, being working with MPTP as part of a research program to find a new antidepressant drug. But at that time it was not known that MPTP was toxic so the two neurologists in the Copenhagen Hospital didn't look at this during their research after the connection. It was very interesting to read about this case concerning Nielsen, as I am Danish, and I can't recall that we ever in the Danish news have heard anything about this case. Nielsen was also brought to USA for during a visit there being measured. But furthermore it also shows up that already back in the 1940s then the first synthesizing of the MPPP and the MPTP was made, by Dr. Albert Ziering, in Hoffman-La Roche, and resulting in a report in 1952. And after discovering that Ziering still is living, Langston has a telephone talking with him, and later, by another, in telephone is told what's written in the report. And it showed up that after the 1952 report there then were made research with monkeys, and later with 6 persons of whom 2 died, and that these also froze up by the MPTP. And after this then in the 1980s DuPont had been testing an analog to MPTP, the TMMP. So there had been many parallel cases during the 40 years before Langston met the frozen George. By Langston some of the studying persons are put on the

work in going searching after other persons who might have been using the same heroin, and doing this by asking about the feeling they had been having in the arm the first 20 minutes after the heroin injection. Using this detail as the 6 frozen addicts had been telling about a different feeling which they actually they then had been having. Many persons are found, and after control interviews in the hospital some of these which looks to be correct, are chosen for following researches. Concerning by surgery repairing the brain in Parkinson's patients, we then read about how they at the same time in respectively the Swedish Lund Hospital, 20 miles straight east from Copenhagen, and in the Centro Medico in Mexico City, in different ways are working on this. And then in the chapter 15, "Miracles" we read about how in New York, in 1987, it is shown that they in Mexico City had solved the Parkinson's problem for the patient Jose Luis Mesa. After this, when they then in other hospitals throughout the world, carries out the same adrenal operation, no one succeeds in getting the same result. Rather parallel to the first heart transplant back in 1967, as remarked in the book. But in Lund they do the surgery in a more advanced way, by only cutting a hole of 1 mm (1/25 inch) in the skull and through this injecting healthy fresh aborted fetus to the correct places, instead as in Mexico, opening the brain. We then follow when George as the first one is send over there in 1989, among other this as the result of the politic from Reagan fighting against legal aborts in USA. And we read about how the actual surgery work on George is started at 8:00 in A.M. and then following what is going on until George again wake up at 7:00 P.M. First how it begin by assembling the frame among other holding his head, then the CAT scanning for geometrical measures inside the brain, for the injection places. Then a doctor by microscope searching on the new aborted, around 8 weeks old, fetus brought in, after healthy parts that can be used, which he after 9:10 A.M. is starting to receive. Then at 2:30 when finished working with the fetus these then are brought to the surgery room under the biggest possibly security, for not destroying 5 hours work. Now they make the burr hole in the top of George's skull and after this, by the special cannula, put down into the skull are injection fetus cells to the different targets. And while doing this one of the doctors again and again are take time of the piston forcing in the cells, and the time used in getting the piston out again, while the cannula to the new places, as years of research have found respectively 20 and 90 seconds being best for this, thereby destroying fewest injected cells, and keeping them very they are wanted. When George again is back in USA they don't realize that anything actually has changed with his health until the Swedish doctor Hakan Widner after many months again visits them, and discover, and shows, especially by parallel showings of new and old films that George has increased. And after

this his health starts to progress faster, in returning back into being normal, and the same also concerning Juanita, the other of the 2 first selected persons of the 6 frozen addicts who had been in Lund. Then on the side 219 we read about Connie, the last of the 3 of the 6 frozen addicts who was send for the brain surgery in Lund, but first in 1994. But before this the problem had been than from back in 1987 her daily amount of the L-dopa had been turned down more and more, and finally stopped in 1990 because she as the result of using the L-dopa had more terrifying hallucinations than the other. Concerning the problem by patients, who during years are using the L-dopa, we in the book read a letter from Lund, telling about how the nurses over there were scared by George as they never before had faced a patient with so awfully similar behavior. But concerning Connie, living home by her family, as result of not getting the L-dopa, she during years had not been able to move arms, legs, hands, head, nearly not talk, and so on, so Langston was afraid that maybe she inside here frozen body no longer was mentally normal. So it's very interesting, and delightful, to read that just 5 month after her surgery in Sweden, when she by her family is brought to Langston, she there shows up dressed in nice clothes, wearing make-up, smiling, and nearly can talk normally when he puts questions to her, and her muscles are nearly perfect and as fast as original. So opposite to the previously George and Juanita, she very fast went into recovering back into being normal. And as a side remark, we know that if we totally don't a muscle during more than one month and a half, then it start to decrease, and furthermore that after long time the brain can forget the existence of a not used muscle. I personally know concerning my right arm and hand, after an accident 7 years ago. But in her case the muscles were frozen until they were waked up, so to me it could be interesting to know more about this. On the side 223 we read that in 1994 died the first of the 6 frozen addicts, the Bill Silvey, in the age of 42 years, one of two brothers who both were frozen by the MPTP being in the bad heroin. When his brain then was examined it showed up that the actual part of the brain, the substantia nigra, was almost totally gone, and that nerve cells in the area still continued to die. As the "The Case of the Frozen Addicts", the copy which I bought by, is a reprint of the original from 1995, we in this new one, starting on the side 235, have the "Additional material for 2014 edition", and beginning on the side 237 with 12 sides containing "What's New in Parkinson Disease Research?". Last during these 12 sides we read that Palfreman in 2011 experienced his own dose of irony, by being diagnosed with Parkinson disease, as he tells it. And that Langston during 4 years has been dealing with a skin cancer which opposite to normally don't benign, so in vain after multiple

treatments speculating about how it will turn out. As none of the persons whom I know are hit by Parkinson's, and only in the news read about persons affected by Parkinson's, I mostly only knew this disease by name, and never new how severe it actually can be. Of course if we need to learn about Parkinson's, we now a days can go to Google, but normally it can be more delightful to read a good book like this one, which it was hard to put down after starting reading in it.

A great read. Six heroin addicts who did some "bad dope" (an underground lab's version of a Demerol analogue), and who strangely went into full-blown Parkinson's as a result of getting this batch of street-lab dope. The medical detective work was complex, as was the later research on the use of stem cell implantation on these addicts in Sweden. A tragic incident for these drug users that lead to tremendous knowledge on this disease, the bulk of the work being done by the neurologist who wrote this book. All of the triumphs and obstacles are on display (including the political maneuvering of the paper-pushing administrators who wanted in on the fame just by being near these efforts), and the sufferings and later relief of the subjects themselves. A very interesting read, a well-edited and well-written book that was hard to put down.

I read the book but it was borrowed via an inter-library loan. I ordered the book a week ago because I went to a talk by the author. Very interesting stuff. This discovery totally revolutionized how Parkinson's disease is being studied. Without the findings documented in this book, there would never have been animal models for drug development and the deep brain stimulation surgery. It is a book that is worth reading, many times over.

On the narrative: This book is very well-written. The authors have done a very good job of making the "case" readable and compelling. Also, the technical aspects are covered quite well. The authors included just enough detail so that important technical issues are explained well for the layman. On the seller: The book arrived on time, in as-described (or perhaps a little better) condition.

So I had this Toxicology class where the professor had the film. I was so intrigued by the story that I searched everywhere for the film and no luck. So I thought well I will buy the book. Unfortunately the subject is interesting but the read is not great. The way they relay the information is not fluid. It is still worth the cost just to become informed on the subject. Thank you

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