



Civil Warriors: The Legal Siege on the Tobacco Industry

Dan Zegart

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A landmark narrative of an epic legal battle, **Civil Warriors** is the gripping behind-the-scenes account of how one tenacious lawyer led the charge against the titans of the tobacco industry. Drawing on five years of eyewitness reporting, thousands of pages of internal documents, and riveting firsthand stories of plaintiffs, lawyers, jurors, and scientists, investigative journalist Dan Zegart deftly interweaves heart-stopping intrigue with rollicking courtroom drama to produce a real-life account that reads like fiction yet is as true to life as today's headlines.

Ron Motley was a product liability lawyer when he made a deathbed pledge to his emphysema-stricken mother: He would punish those responsible for her death. Little did Motley know what it would take for him and other die-hard lawyers, scientists, and tobacco-busters to bring the renegade tobacco industry to justice. And as Motley soon discovered, it would take every bit of the stockpile of evidence he would uncover to match the mountain of legal muscle that stood between the tobacco industry and justice.

Taking us onto the front lines of Motley's crusade, Dan Zegart follows the attorney to a dark and dangerous world where maverick scientists and corporate whistle-blowers step from the shadows to reveal the truth behind the industry "spin." We meet the unforgettable--and sometimes unforgivable--cast of characters that draw Motley on toward his goals, chief among whom is Cliff Douglas, a lone-wolf lawyer and self-styled "guerrilla fighter" instrumental in bringing the industry's darkest secrets to light--the mysterious ex-Reynolds employee known as "Deep Cough," who told Douglas where evidence on nicotine-laced tobacco could be found--researchers Paul Mele and Victor DeNoble, who revealed the addictive nature of nicotine--and were advised by the FBI to check their cars for bombs every morning. And in a darkly entertaining, edge-of-your-seat tale, **Civil Warriors** reveals how Ron Motley--a tormented and flamboyant yet tireless opponent--led his quest for truth, justice, and hundred-billion-dollar awards...to penetrate, finally, what he saw as the "control room of the conspiracy," an inner circle of lawyers who protected tobacco for thirty years.

In the end, it was not a single civil action but hundreds that finally brought the tobacco industry to the accountability it had avoided for so long. This important work is at once a grand adventure and a towering work of investigative journalism--an eye-opening report on the way justice really works in America today.

Ron Motley saw his mother a number of times just before she died, when she was at Columbia Trident Medical Center in early 1984. On the last visit, Ron came in late, having flown from the West Coast. He walked to her bed, through empty corridors, and sat by her head, enshrouded with tubes and plastic. The woman he saw there was a miniature of herself, her dark eyes wan, her slenderness shrunken. He sat a moment, then knelt. He felt whatever a boy feels for his mother, because at that moment, the surge of crying takes you back. And he reached a place where a lie has no meaning, and every word spoken is true. "I'm going to get 'em, Mom," he said. "I swear to you before God, if it's the last thing I do, I'll get 'em." He stood up, touched her hair, kissed her on the cheek. He held still a moment, watching her chest rise and fall, hearing the pumps and ventilators and monitors hum. Then he walked back down the empty corridors, leaving a woman he would never find again and could never forget. He planned to make certain that the companies that killed her never forgot her either.

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