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Leroy D. Vandam, M.D.: An Anesthesia Journey (DVD). By Rafael Ortega, M.D. Boston, Anaesthesia Associates of Massachusetts, 2004. Price: Free, available through maureen.omalley@bmc.org, Anesthesia Department, Boston University Medical Center, 617-638-6950.

Leroy D. Vandam, M.D.: An Anesthesia Journey is an interesting DVD on many levels. The DVD is largely an interview by Rafael Ortega, M.D. (Associate Professor, Department of Anesthesiology, Boston University Medical Center, Boston, Massachusetts), with the late Dr. Vandam in his Harvard Office. The topic under discussion was anesthesia equipment, and Vandam related his experiences with the myriad machines, vaporizers, ventilators, pulse oximeters, and other tools of the anesthesiologist during his 50+-yr career. The breadth of equipment used points out the tremendous change in technology over the time period. In some ways, were it not for the skill of the anesthesiologist, one wonders how anyone survived an anesthetic!

The program on the DVD is very well constructed. The producer has resisted the temptation to have Dr. Vandam on the screen the entire time. Rather, while Vandam speaks, images are brought forward that help the audience understand that which is under discussion. Another interesting technological feat is that although the interview is in black and white, the equipment images are, for the most part, in color. The interspacing of these contrasting images is pleasing to the viewer and helps move the production along well. One never tires of watching the DVD, a fault unfortunately common to historical presentations.

In addition to the history of anesthesia equipment, this program is a retrospective on Dr. Vandam's career. Multiple images of him as a young physician are displayed, and elements of his career are discussed. An unusual aspect to this presentation is the images of the various centers in which Vandam either trained or was a faculty member. From Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore, Maryland) to the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital (Boston, Massachusetts), a "face" has been placed with the name. Remarkable facts about these places are noted, including the small number of operating rooms at the Brigham when Vandam arrived to establish a residency training program.

However, this DVD program is not without its omissions. There is no discussion of why Vandam left surgery and went into anesthesia, especially after his noting that during his Army career as a surgeon, he gave grief to the anesthesiologist! His classic textbook, written with James Eckenhoff, M.D., and Robert Dripps, M.D., is not discussed. Vandam was also an Editor-in-chief of *Anesthesiology*, guiding the publication during the 1960s. Finally, Vandam's career as a watercolorist in New England is not documented. The Wood Library-Museum (Park Ridge, Illinois) has for years sold signed reproductions of his series of paintings of William Thomas Greene Morton's houses and barns. The *Careers in Anesthesiology* series has a reproduction of his watercolor of the American Society of Anesthesiologists' Headquarters Building (Park Ridge, Illinois) in the frontispiece. Although the original interview did not cover these topics, it could have been added into the presentation.

Leroy Vandam died on April 8, 2004, at the age of 90 yr. His passing, in many respects, marks the end of an era. Vandam was a member of that generation of anesthesiologists who took the infrastructure laid down in the 1930s and 1940s and built the current specialty of anesthesiology that we all enjoy. Outside of medicine, Vandam was a noted historian of Morton and the events of "ether day," the "ether controversy," and beyond. He was a watercolorist whose paintings were continuously displayed at the American Society of Anesthesiologists Art Exhibit. Over his career in medicine, he revolutionized the practice of anesthesiology, developed an outstanding residency program, edited the leading journal and, some would argue, textbook in the specialty, and was a driving force behind the professionalism of discipline. Watching this DVD is seeing one of the giants of our

heritage come to life in the context of our shared history. It is a DVD well worth exploring.

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Drugs, Addiction, and the Law: Policy, Politics, and Public Health. By Peter J. Cohen, M.D., J.D. Durham, NC, Carolina Academic Press, 2004. Pages: 412. Price: \$40.00.

This remarkable book is the creation of an author uniquely qualified to comment on the multiple facets the "drug problem." Dr. Cohen has spent much of his career as an academic anesthesiologist with an interest in assisting addicted physicians. Later in his career, Dr. Cohen attended law school. This book represents an approach to a problem altogether too familiar to anesthesiologists, but from a completely different orientation than is the norm. This book is not about the "medicine side" of drugs; rather, it is about the legal past and present of drug laws. It provides an exhaustive look at the societal challenges created by drugs of abuse and how the legal system predicated upon such principles as "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness" has responded during the past century and a half to address these complicated issues—that is, the tension between an attitude of "live and let live," the desire to prevent harm to others, and the desire to "legislate morality."

The author uses the very useful and engaging device of phrasing multiple questions in the opening of many of the chapters. In doing so, he forces the reader to question many of their preconceptions and biases. For example, in chapter 12, "Crack, Powder, and Justice—Illegal Drugs and Sentencing," the author provides this list of questions:

- Which branch of government has the ultimate responsibility for sentencing? Judicial—how much discretion should they be allowed? Legislative—authority to enact statutes setting mandatory minimums, maximums, or both Executive—role of prosecutorial discretion
- Should there be a distinction between selling and using?
- Should the law distinguish among the various drug sellers? Drug kingpin v. regional dealer v. local dealer v. "dealing to a friend" Addicts who sell to support their addiction v. no-addict selling to make money Police officer selling drugs used as evidence v. "ordinary civilian"
- Should the law distinguish among various drug customers—child v. adult; drug-naïve v. addict?
- Role of "proportionality"—how to "make the punishment fit the crime"
- Should the law impose different sentences for different drugs sold or used? If the answer is yes, how can we develop objective criteria for distinguishing among the many drugs (marijuana, heroin, cocaine {powder v. crack}, LSD, "date rape" pills) involved in the illegal trade? Can, or should, legislators distinguish between scientific fact and public perception?
- Should the amount of drug sold be a factor in sentencing? How should we determine this amount: actual weight v. only the weight of the active ingredient?
- Should the "threat" to society that the specific drug represents be a factor in sentencing, e.g., marijuana v. cocaine v. crack? If so, how should we measure such threat?

*This list of questions is taken directly from the book being reviewed.

- Should the location of drug sales (*e.g.*, near schools) be a factor in sentencing?
- Should the law be concerned with how customers pay drug dealers—money drugs, sex for drugs, committing other crimes for drugs?
- What should be the sentence—prison, civil commitment, drug court, monetary fine (how much to impose and to whom should it be paid?)?
- How should the law deal with third party involvement? Should (can) mens rea (*i.e.*, the person committing the crime intended to do something wrong) be taken into account (knowingly *v.* negligently *v.* innocently or naively)?*

Having thus “laid the table,” the author then goes on to provide historical context and precedents in an effort to define how the current laws evolved. These discussions are accompanied by extensive quotation from actual court rulings; often, the cases have sufficient complexity that they have risen to the level of the U.S. Supreme Court.

This book is clearly an effort to present the dizzying complexity of U.S. drug laws in a format that will be approachable to nonlawyers. Although it is understandably heavy on legal concepts and phraseology, the author makes a valiant attempt to help the reader understand

the more arcane aspects of the laws. It is, again understandably, at times quite a dry read, mostly during the lengthy quotations from court rulings. These quotations are essential, however; mere paraphrasing would do a disservice to the reader, and the author has wisely chosen to provide them in appropriate places.

As one who viewed the recent right-to-life case in Florida as the most impressive civics lesson in my lifetime, I thoroughly enjoyed this book. As one who has often wondered whether a policy of drug legalization might be preferable to the chaos of our current “war on drugs,” I found this book helpful in shoring up arguments both pro and con. In this light, I was struck with the incredible complexity merely unwinding the tangled threads and layers of existing drug laws would involve if legalization were attempted.

In summary, this book is superb. It informs, challenges, educates, and demystifies our system of drug laws. I came away with deep respect for the monumental challenge faced by the author and for the excellence of his final product.

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