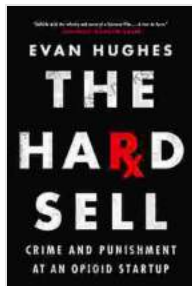


Crime and Punishment at an Opioid Startup: The Unraveling of Insys Therapeutics



The Hard Sell: Crime and Punishment at an Opioid Startup by Evan Hughes

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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Screen Reader : Supported
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The opioid crisis has devastated communities across the United States, claiming hundreds of thousands of lives and leaving countless families torn apart. In the midst of this tragedy, Insys Therapeutics emerged as a major player in the illicit opioid trade. The company's executives engaged in a brazen scheme of fraud, racketeering, and conspiracy, fueling the crisis and profiting handsomely from the misery of others.

This article delves into the rise and fall of Insys Therapeutics, exploring the crimes that led to the downfall of its executives and the lasting impact of their actions on the opioid crisis.

The Rise of Insys Therapeutics

Insys Therapeutics was founded in 2002 by John Kapoor, a pharmaceutical executive with a track record of success. The company initially focused on

developing drugs for cancer pain, but in 2012, it launched a new product called Subsys, a fentanyl-based spray intended to treat breakthrough pain in cancer patients.

Subsys was a highly potent opioid, and Insys Therapeutics executives knew that it could be addictive. However, they downplayed the risks of addiction and aggressively marketed the drug to doctors, encouraging them to prescribe it for a wide range of conditions, including back pain, headaches, and even anxiety.

The company's sales force was particularly aggressive, offering doctors kickbacks, free trips, and other incentives to prescribe Subsys. As a result, Subsys sales skyrocketed, and Insys Therapeutics became one of the most profitable pharmaceutical companies in the United States.

The Crime and Punishment

In 2015, Insys Therapeutics executives began to face scrutiny from law enforcement over their marketing practices. A federal investigation revealed that the company had engaged in a wide range of illegal activities, including:

- Bribing doctors to prescribe Subsys for unapproved uses
- Lying to insurers about the risks of Subsys addiction
- Laundering money through offshore accounts
- Conspiring to defraud the government

In 2017, John Kapoor was arrested and charged with racketeering, conspiracy, and fraud. He was later convicted and sentenced to 65 years in

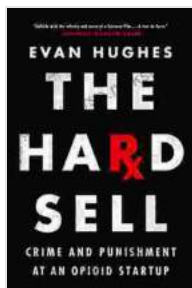
prison, the longest sentence ever imposed on a pharmaceutical executive.

In 2019, five other Insys Therapeutics executives were convicted of racketeering and conspiracy charges. They received sentences ranging from 15 to 20 years in prison.

The Impact of Insys Therapeutics

The crimes of Insys Therapeutics executives had a devastating impact on the opioid crisis. The company's aggressive marketing practices led to a surge in Subsys prescriptions, which contributed to the increase in opioid overdoses and deaths.

In addition, the company's fraud and racketeering activities undermined the public's trust in



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