



Concussion

By Jeanne Marie Laskas

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NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • Now a major motion picture starring Will Smith, *Concussion* is the riveting, unlikely story of Dr. Bennet Omalu, the pathologist who made one of the most significant medical discoveries of the twenty-first century, a discovery that challenges the existence of America's favorite sport and puts Omalu in the crosshairs of football's most powerful corporation: the NFL.

Jeanne Marie Laskas first met the young forensic pathologist Dr. Bennet Omalu in 2009, while reporting a story for *GQ* that would go on to inspire the movie *Concussion*. Omalu told her about a day in September 2002, when, in a dingy morgue in downtown Pittsburgh, he picked up a scalpel and made a discovery that would rattle America in ways he'd never intended. Omalu was new to America, chasing the dream, a deeply spiritual man escaping the wounds of civil war in Nigeria. The body on the slab in front of him belonged to a fifty-year-old named Mike Webster, aka "Iron Mike," a Hall of Fame center for the Pittsburgh Steelers, one of the greatest ever to play the game. After retiring in 1990, Webster had suffered a dizzyingly steep decline. Toward the end of his life, he was living out of his van, tasing himself to relieve his chronic pain, and fixing his rotting teeth with Super Glue. *How did this happen?*, Omalu asked himself. *How did a young man like Mike Webster end up like this?* The search for answers would change Omalu's life forever and put him in the crosshairs of one of the most powerful corporations in America: the National Football League. What Omalu discovered in Webster's brain—proof that Iron Mike's mental deterioration was no accident but a disease caused by blows to the head that could affect everyone playing the game—was the one truth the NFL wanted to ignore.

Taut, gripping, and gorgeously told, *Concussion* is the stirring story of one unlikely man's decision to stand up to a multibillion-dollar colossus, and to tell the world the truth.

Advance praise for *Concussion*

"A gripping medical mystery and a dazzling portrait of the young scientist no one wanted to listen to . . . a fabulous, essential read."—**Rebecca Skloot, author of *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks***

“The story of Dr. Bennet Omalu’s battle against the NFL is classic David and Goliath stuff, and Jeanne Marie Laskas—one of my favorite writers on earth—makes it as exciting as any great courtroom or gridiron drama. A riveting, powerful human tale—and a master class on how to tell a story.”—**Charles Duhigg, author of *The Power of Habit***

“Bennet Omalu forced football to reckon with head trauma. The NFL doesn’t want you to hear his story, but Jeanne Marie Laskas makes it unforgettable. This book is gripping, eye-opening, and full of heart.”—**Emily Bazelon, author of *Sticks and Stones***

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Editorial Review

Review

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About the Author

Jeanne Marie Laskas is the author of seven books, including *Concussion*, *Hidden America*, and *The Exact Same Moon*. Her writing has appeared in *GQ*, *Esquire*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *O: The Oprah Magazine*, and many other publications. Laskas serves as director of The Writing Program at the University of Pittsburgh, where she teaches creative writing, and she lives on a horse farm in Pennsylvania with her husband and two children.

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Jackie Lafond:

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