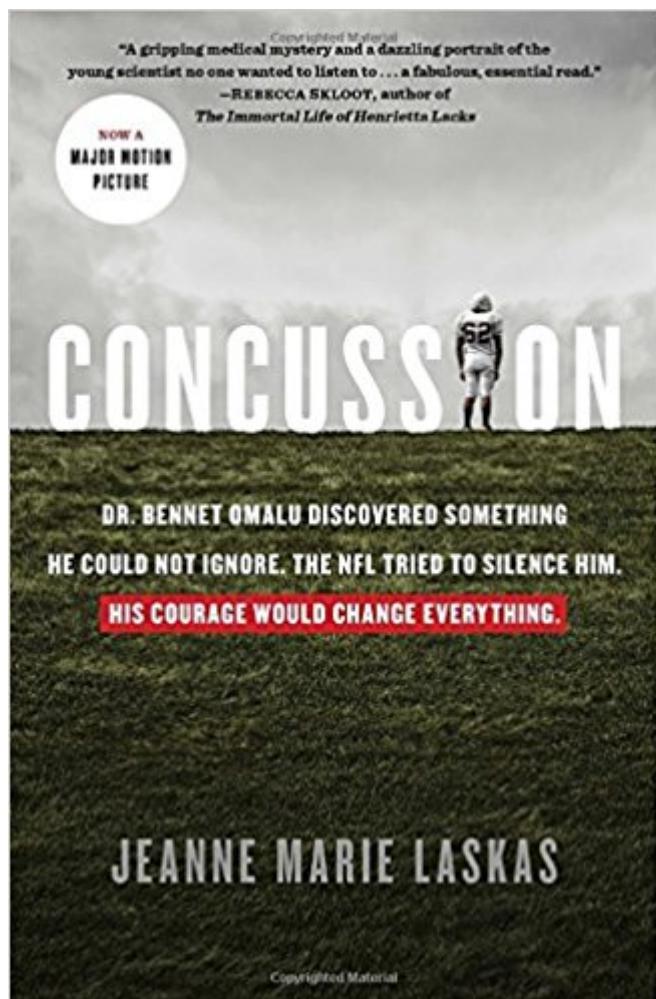


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# Concussion



## Synopsis

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, tasering 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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## Customer Reviews

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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.

The subject of CTE discovery, the politics and influence of the NFL and how this story has played out are fascinating. What made this book work for me was reading the book while also watching

YouTube interviews with Omalu, game footage of players who were referenced in the book and other articles and writings available on the web. This book itself was so-so for me due to confusing writing and lack of logical/critical thinking by the author. Also, you can tell when an author has developed a deep expertise in the field of which he/she is writing and this author didn't seem to have intimate understanding of the NFL/football or pathology/political dynamics of medicine/science. There's a fair bit of setup at the beginning of the book related to the Nigerian civil ware that didn't contribute to the rest of the story for me so I don't know why that's there. The writing also just didn't flow well, I was frequently having to stop and unwind something. The author makes statements like the NFL had proof of football causing CTE in 2005 which is decidedly NOT what the 2005 Omalu paper's conclusions state. It simply said that he found CTE in one NFL player and suggests it should be further studied. So, a very interesting topic, this book fills in some of the picture in the context of other research but has some holes.

My son has CTE so this movie explained so much to me. It was very factual and I PRAY more important people would listen and LEARN from this and yes. my son has been told he has about a year to live. He will die before his 58th birthday. No parent should have to lose a child to something that could have been prevented.

The book gets into much more depth than the movie. The obstacles he overcame as a child to an adult is amazing. The book is very well written. Flows nicely. Very much enjoyed it and would be willing to read a follow up as well. Good luck to you, Dr. Bennett Omalu

This book really exposes the degree to which medical research can be strangled by a powerful lobby (in this case, the NFL) and the degree to which institutionalized prejudice can prevent thoughtful researchers from being heard and properly acknowledged for their work. This belongs on your bookshelf next to *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot. Read it.

A superb account of how Bennet Omalu discovered chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) and what the NFL did to suppress his work and discredit him. It is clear the author spent years getting the story together and striving for accuracy. This is a book every football fan, every parent of a potential football player, and all active young players should read. It is unlikely that Sony Pictures, bowing to the NFL, will be telling the same story <http://nyti.ms/1KpMX4V> in the upcoming movie, making this book even more important.

The accomplishments of Dr Bennett Omalu are as awesome as his integrity. Read the book ; see the movie. Dr Omalu has spoken the truth and will save generations of young men from brain injury. His courage in persisting in the face of the NFL is awesome. He is a tribute to his parents and a role model for immigrants everywhere. I'm just glad he chose the US. A superb story, and an excellent read

Was not really interested in reading this book, choosed by my bookclub. So glad that I did. Found it engaging and important. This book has definately changed my feelings about football. Where do we go from here? A must read.

Superb. A story of how honesty, vulnerability, and commitment to truth changes society.

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