



Fake Silk: The Lethal History of Viscose Rayon

By Paul David Blanc

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When a new technology makes people ill, how high does the body count have to be before protective steps are taken?

This disturbing book tells a dark story of hazardous manufacturing, poisonous materials, environmental abuses, political machinations, and economics trumping safety concerns. It explores the century-long history of “fake silk,” or cellulose viscose, used to produce such products as rayon textiles and tires, cellophane, and everyday kitchen sponges. Paul Blanc uncovers the grim history of a product that crippled and even served a death sentence to many industry workers while also releasing toxic carbon disulfide into the environment.

Viscose, an innovative and lucrative product first introduced in the early twentieth century, quickly became a multinational corporate enterprise. Blanc investigates industry practices from the beginning through two highly profitable world wars, the midcentury export of hazardous manufacturing to developing countries, and the current “greenwashing” of viscose as an eco-friendly product. Deeply researched and boldly presented, this book brings to light an industrial hazard whose egregious history ranks with those of asbestos, lead, and mercury.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Paul Blanc's book compellingly chronicles the all-too-real dangers behind the production of 'fake' silk. A terrifying exposé of what happens when the textile business puts profits before health."—Alison Matthews David, author of *Fashion Victims: The Dangers of Dress Past and Present*
(Alison Matthews David)

"Action-packed . . . Reading *Fake Silk*, I could not help but wonder about the manufacturing process behind my T-shirt or the new dress hanging in my closet. Was someone harmed in the making of the kitchen sponge I just unwrapped?"—*Science*
(*Science*)

"*Fake Silk: The Lethal History of Viscose Rayon* is a brilliant analysis of the history of carbon disulfide, and especially its use in the production of two classic consumer products of the twentieth century, rayon and cellophane. But of course, as with any good history, it is much more.... This transnational—indeed, international—history is breathtaking in its scope, for it encompasses economic, medical, industrial, labor, and cultural history in its purview. In short, this is an essential book for anyone interested in how a powerful industry can affect the health and well-being of workers and others across the globe."—Gerald Markowitz, *American Journal of Industrial Medicine* 60:408–409

(Gerald Markowitz *American Journal of Industrial Medicine* 60:408–409)

"This is an essential read for all interested in the history of occupational disease and of our increasing knowledge, yet failure to implement, the controls needed to reduce the risk of preventable disease and premature death."—Sir Anthony Newman Taylor, Imperial College, London
(Sir Anthony Newman Taylor)

"Blanc's meticulous research has yielded a calm and overwhelming indictment of the murderous treatment that rayon workers worldwide have endured at the hands of their corporate masters."—Eric Frumin, Health and Safety Director, US trade union federation Change to Win
(Eric Frumin)

"A shocking story. Blanc draws back the curtain on the corporate deceit and neglect connected to products that have come to epitomize modern life."—Frederick Rowe Davis, author of *Banned: A History of Pesticides and the Science of Toxicology*
(Frederick Rowe Davis)

"A fascinating investigation into the colorful century-long history of a pernicious industrial hazard. A cautionary must-read for anyone who cares about eco-friendly living and integrity too."—Don Katz, founder, Audible.com
(Don Katz)

"[*Fake Silk*], looking past the allure of silky rayon and cellophane, exposes the public health dangers of manufacture. This is a major and significant work."—*Choice*
(*Choice*)

"Lifting the veil on the lamentable history of rayon manufacture, *Fake Silk* reveals with forensic elegance and clarity – through meticulous research and poignant first-hand testimonies – the toll it has exacted on generations of workers. Dizzying in scope, compelling in the breadth and depth of its cultural and historical references, and gripping in its exploration of scientific advances and their human cost, it offers a masterly survey of a global industry, a powerful indictment of its ruthless pursuit of profit, and a moving tribute to the real people who have suffered disease, disability and death at its hands."—Barbara Mellor, translator of *Agnes Humbert's Resistance*
(Barbara Mellor)

About the Author

Paul David Blanc, M.D., is professor of medicine and holds the Endowed Chair in Occupational and Environmental Medicine, University of California, San Francisco. He is author of *How Everyday Products Make People Sick* and writes the Household Hazards blog for *Psychology Today*.

Users Review

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give you a large amount of information about this world now. So you can see the represented of the world with this book.

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The reason? Because this Fake Silk: The Lethal History of Viscose Rayon is an unordinary book that the inside of the reserve waiting for you to snap the item but latter it will surprise you with the secret the idea inside. Reading this book alongside it was fantastic author who write the book in such incredible way makes the content inside of easier to understand, entertaining means but still convey the meaning entirely. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this any longer or you going to regret it. This book will give you a lot of rewards than the other book include such as help improving your expertise and your critical thinking way. So , still want to hold up having that book? If I have been you I will go to the reserve store hurriedly.

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