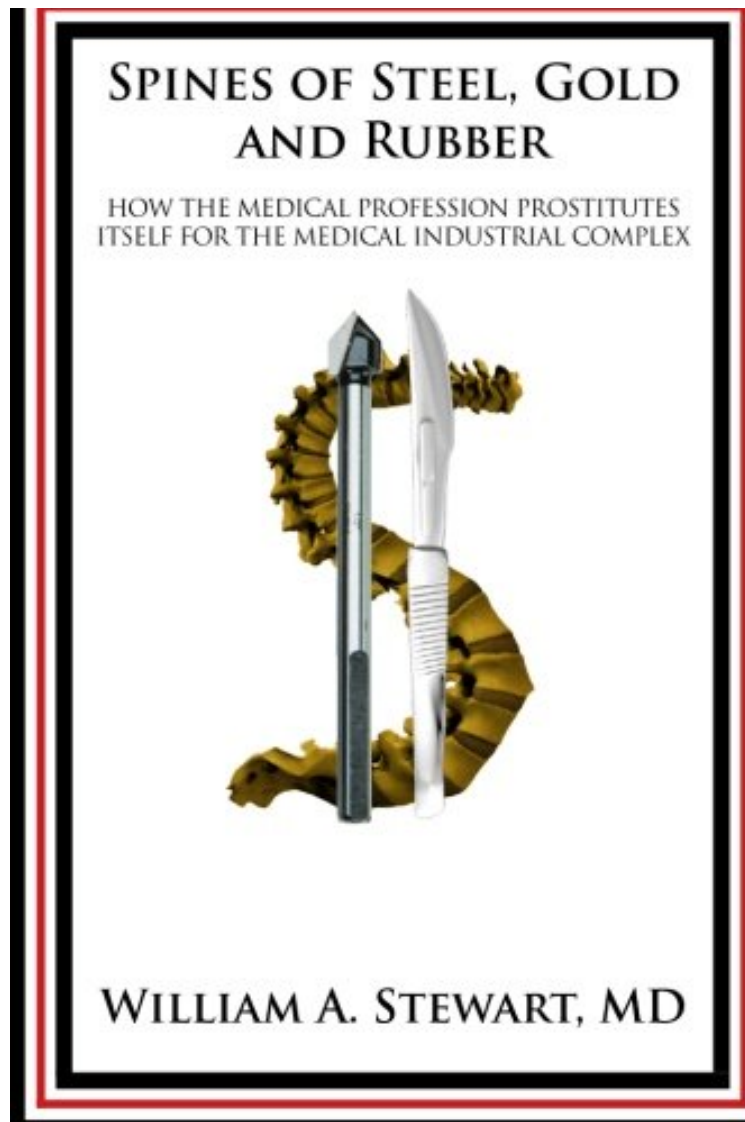


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## **Spines of Steel, Gold and Rubber.: How the medical profession prostitutes itself to the medical-industrial complex**

*William A Stewart MD*  
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When is a hospital a place of healing and when is it a business, looking out not for the patients' well being but for its own bottom line? When is a star spinal surgeon a shimmer of hope for a patient in pain, and when is he a moneymaker for his department? And how defined are the lines that delineate these dualities, after all? Inappropriate spinal fusion; fueled by financial incentive rather than strict medical need; is the subject of *Spines of Steel, Gold and Rubber*, a satirical work of fiction by William A. Stewart, M.D. While this procedure relieves a great many patients of their pain and suffering throughout the United States, too many surgeons, even high-profile ones, cut corners in startling ways. These procedures generate profit for the physicians and the hospitals they represent, but risk patients' lives and sometimes provide sub-standard results. The monitoring of this phenomenon is almost non-existent, and whistleblowers are ostracized; or worse - by their colleagues and employers. Ultimately, the unassuming patient is the victim of deception, greed, incompetence, and cover-up. Dr. Stewart is a widely respected retired neurosurgeon. He spent 20 years on the Board of Professional Medical Conduct under the New York State Department of Health and 15 years on the Defense Board of the Medical Liability Mutual Insurance Company. During this time he witnessed unimaginable transgressions, many times over, in ethical medical practice. This experience has enabled him to write this account; fiction based on actual cases; that details incompetent medical practice and the devastation it visits on patients and their families, well-intentioned medical practitioners, and the whole of the medical profession.