The Lobotomist: A Maverick Medical Genius and His Tragic Quest to Rid the World of Mental Illness
Jack El-Hai

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DESCRIPTION

The Lobotomist explores one of the darkest chapters of American medicine: the desperate attempt to treat the hundreds of thousands of psychiatric patients in need of help during the middle decades of the twentieth century. Into this crisis stepped Walter Freeman, M.D., who saw a solution in lobotomy, a brain operation intended to reduce the severity of psychotic symptoms. Drawing on Freeman's documents and interviews with Freeman's family, Jack El-Hai takes a penetrating look at the life and work of this complex scientific genius.

Although many patients did not benefit from the thousands of lobotomies Freeman performed, others believed their lobotomies changed them for the better. Drawing on a rich collection of documents Freeman left behind and interviews with Freeman's family, Jack El-Hai takes a penetrating look into the life of this complex scientific genius and traces the physician's fascinating life and work.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JACK EL-HAI is the Executive Vice President of the American Society of Journalists and Authors and a winner of the June Roth Memorial Award for Medical Journalism. A contributor to the Atlantic Monthly, the Washington Post Magazine, American Heritage, and numerous other publications, he lives in Minneapolis with his wife and two daughters.

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