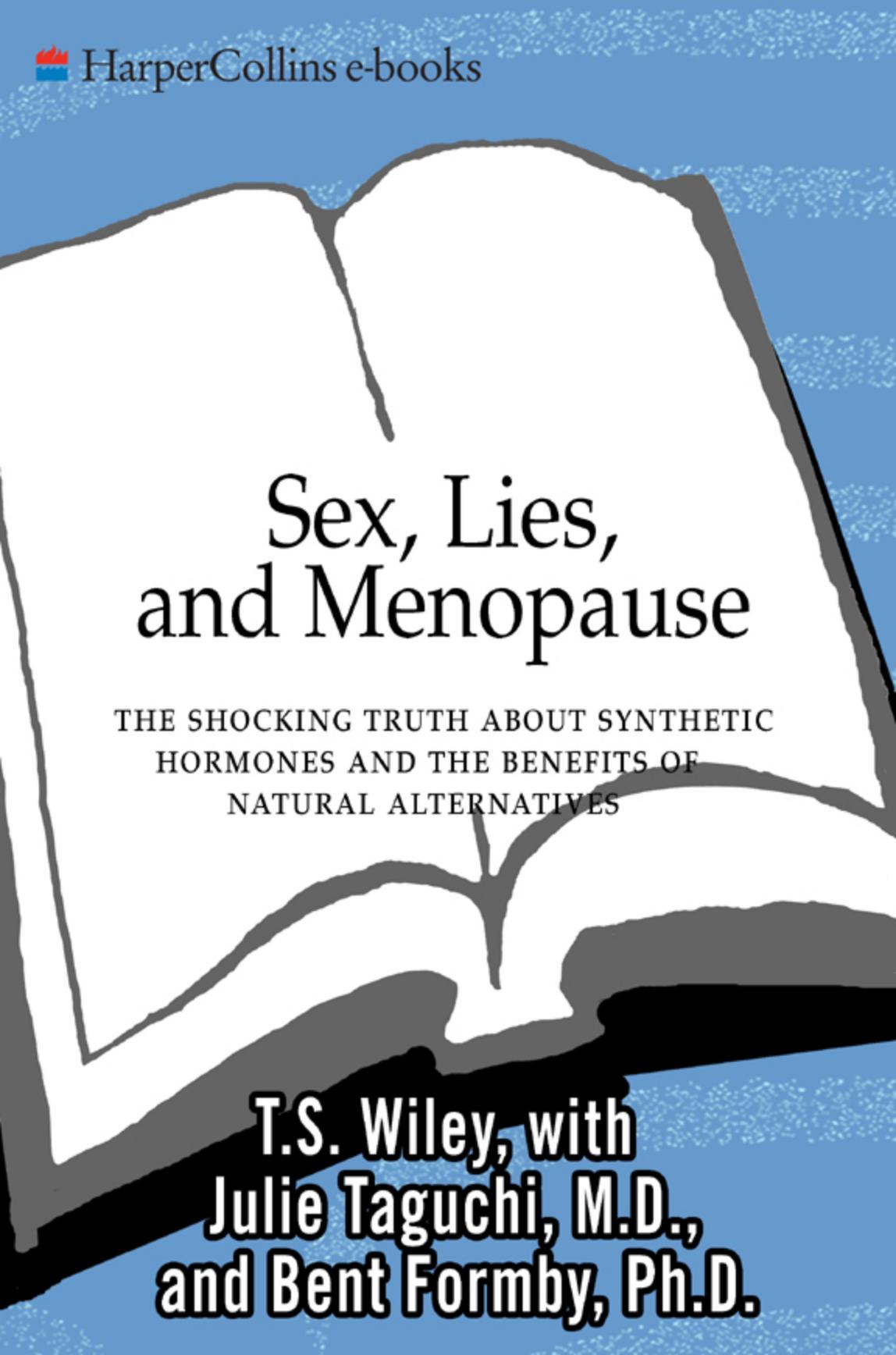


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Sex, Lies, and Menopause

THE SHOCKING TRUTH ABOUT SYNTHETIC
HORMONES AND THE BENEFITS OF
NATURAL ALTERNATIVES

**T.S. Wiley, with
Julie Taguchi, M.D.,
and Bent Formby, Ph.D.**



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The Shocking Truth About

**SYNTHETIC
HORMONES AND
THE BENEFITS
OF NATURAL
ALTERNATIVES**



SEX,

LIES,

and

MENOPAUSE

 HarperCollins e-books

The work in this book is dedicated to

ROSE KUSHNER

and

LINDA DONOFRIO

PLAYER: We only know what we're told, and that's little enough.
And for all we know, that isn't even true.
For all anyone knows, nothing is.
Everything has to be taken on trust;
truth is only that which is taken to be true.
It's the currency of living.
There may be nothing behind it, but it doesn't
make any difference so long as it is honored.
One acts on assumptions.
What do you assume?

— TOM STOPPARD,
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead,
Act II

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—T.S. WILEY

part **one**

S E X

IT'S ONLY ROCK AND ROLL

The drums were pounding. The beat, getting louder and louder, was on the upswing. The sun made its mark for noon in the sky, and well-worn trails were lined with throngs of worshipers who would snake toward the flat open spaces where a festival would take place. Hundreds would gather near gigantic structures built for the occasion. Those who weren't engaged in work were engaged in play.

The ground was littered with small naked running children, mothers and babies nursing on blankets, and yapping dogs festooned with red strips of cloth. In an adjacent field, men naked to the waist except for the beads around their necks passed around a bamboo smoking tube and danced and laughed and shouted. Men and women, their long hair decorated with flowers and rawhide bands, started swaying in unison, and some seemed to be hallucinating. The drums were inside them now, in their brains and bones.

The lone drums and flutes were drowned out by instruments with strings; bigger, louder drums; and singing that would go on night and day for three days. The physicality of union on many levels, from eating to bathing and mating,¹ may have been the true purpose of the gathering.

Some of the fervid splashed naked in the small pond. Others, in pairs or groups, copulated openly. They stroked and petted each other and continuously displayed grooming behavior like combing hair, rubbing backs, and stroking one another's arms and feet. Finally, on the third day, the gods hosed them down. The skies cracked wide open, and a flood of near-biblical proportions ensued, the ultimate cosmic release at the end of the frenzy, an

orgasm of nature. The place: Upstate New York. The tribe described is us, and the scene is from a documentary called *Woodstock*. We *thought* we invented music, love, and sex.

We were so young.

Since time began, men and women have heard music and been driven to sexual ecstasy. It's common knowledge that listening to music can be a religious experience—especially loud music. For many in Western culture, until the Renaissance, God was actually conceived of as only sound or a vibration. The scientific reason for this is that in the software controlling hearing and balance in your brain, a small organ called the *sacculus*, part of the balance-regulating system in the inner ear, is “tickled” at certain decibel levels.

Loud music can activate the sacculus and create the feeling of movement or floating. That's why listening to music above 70 decibels sends a pleasurable buzz through the sacculus that ends up at the hypothalamus, a buzz that thrills the listener in the way bungee jumping or swinging very high does, a simultaneous flying and falling feeling.²⁻⁶ It's no coincidence that the distribution of frequencies typical of rock concerts and dance clubs is at exactly the right decibel level to make listeners feel as if they're floating. Your sacculus also speaks to the part of your brain that controls drives like hunger, sex, and more than a few other hedonistic responses—the hypothalamus.⁷⁻¹³

That's part of the reason sex, drugs, and rock and roll go so well together. Of course, the drugs we take now—Prozac, Paxil, Klonopin, Ambien, Tamoxifen, Vioxx, Claritin, or Lipitor, Beta-blockers or ACE Inhibitors, not to mention Advil and Tylenol PM, just aren't as much fun.

Talkin' About My Generation

Only about thirty-five of the seventy-five million of us born between 1948 and 1952 made it to college, where most of us were introduced to the principles of self-medication. By 1969, according to a Gallup survey of fifty-seven college campuses, 31 percent of students had smoked pot and between 10 and 15 percent admitted to using LSD. To clarify: At least ten to twelve million of us smoked marijuana and between three and five million of us dropped acid. Today we get a kick out of loading up on nutritional supplements at the health food store.

It's just not the same.

We're just not radical anymore. But we should be. Our very lives are at stake, because half of all of the women today have already been on synthetic *hormone replacement therapy* (HRT), and we're not even sure of the damage it's done. And on the opposite side of the coin, most of us aren't really sure that we want to give up our drugs (HRT).

Is living without hormones really living?

We need to find out how much harm has been done and whether or not we should ever put our hormones back at all. Most of us would admit that without them we don't really feel good—no matter how many supplements we buy or how many miles we jog or how little fat we eat. But, at the same time, we're all scared of heart disease, strokes, and cancer. We face the same inevitable health condition that made our parents obstinate, obdurate, and obsolete—a condition called *aging*, characterized by being stubborn, hardened, and out of date. None of us want to look and feel “old,” but most of us are in menopause.

In 2002, forty-six million women will reach the age of menopause.¹⁴

Menopause is the hallmark of aging in women.

There exists today more than a few of us who once fought the good fight for personal freedom, but now sit back and spout the party line of our generation about menopause being *natural*. Of course it's “natural.”

So is pregnancy in the wake of free love, but that didn't stop us from taking hormones to avoid it in our youth. Those miracle drugs—contraceptives—were the hormones that kept us in school or going to work every day while having all the sex we wanted, without the natural consequence of childbirth and breast-feeding.

It's a painful irony that when we were young and had everything to lose (our fertility and potential for genetic immortality), many of us eagerly tossed back hormones made out of mutated synthetic estrogens, fake progesterone, and even, sometimes, testosterone. In effect, a good many of us have been on synthetic HRT most of our adult lives. We may have taken them for a different purpose, but the drugs in contraceptives were basically the same synthetic hormones that are in HRT.

The doctors who prescribed them had no idea they might impact our future fertility or what those hormones might be doing to us physically by *preventing* pregnancy. And now the very same authorities who wrote those prescriptions without a thought are warning us every day against taking the

very *same* hormones. Doctors and researchers are in a panic because medicine is just starting to figure out exactly how toxic the synthetic hormone “drugs” like PremPro can really be.

PremPro is a combination pill containing two synthetic (invented in a lab) *hormonelike* drugs. PremPro actually contains fake progesterone or progestin, called medroxyprogesterone (MPA), or Provera in combination with a metabolite of horse estrogen, equinol, which is *not* like human estrogen, called Premarin.

Back in the 1970s, when Provera was invented, Premarin, the “Prem” in PremPro, was prescribed alone. The low-dose chronic horse estrogen caused uterine cancer by fostering an *overgrowth* of the lining of the uterus. Originally, a doctor aiming to replace hormones only prescribed estrogen replacement therapy (ERT). But once the epidemic increase of uterine cancer was identified,¹⁵⁻¹⁷ instead of pulling Premarin from the shelves, Upjohn, the original maker of MPA, invented another drug out of natural progesterone. The molecule of natural progesterone found in a compound called *genistein* in plants¹⁸ was chemically altered into a patentable drug that has been proven to have life-threatening side effects like heart disease, breast cancer, stroke, and dementia.¹⁹⁻²³ The two drugs were eventually packaged together and remarketed as PremPro to prevent the horse estrogen from causing uterine cancer, and increase the market share to women with uteruses.

However, unlike real progesterone, which has a rhythmic, cyclical presence in your body two weeks out of every month, if you take PremPro, you receive Provera every day. In actuality, this combination of horse estrogen and fake progesterone²⁴ can’t ever re-create a normal cycle, so although it’s marketed as HRT, *it’s not*. It’s not really hormone *replacement* for two reasons: (1) because it’s a drug, and (2) because it’s prescribed in a static dose, which has no resemblance to what used to go on hormonally in your body when you were young.

In the end, the static, chronic dose of a progestin like Provera in a combination dose with an animal-source estrogen like Premarin blocks the horse estrogen’s effect *every day*. So any benefits known to result in heart, brain, and breast from estrogen are lost or diminished. Even though this combination drug can cause breast cancer, heart disease, and dementia,²⁵⁻²⁸ it’s still widely available to women all over the world.

There's no question, in fact, that Wyeth-Ayerst knows this and still does not withdraw it voluntarily from the marketplace. There is no question because the side effects are published in the package inserts written by the company²⁹⁻³⁰ and many of the studies reporting toxicity³¹⁻³⁴ were funded by Wyeth-Ayerst themselves, or they at the very least donated their product for testing. There's no question because they provided free drugs for the recent Women's Health Initiative study that said so.

Now, according to the news, hormone replacement not only increases your risk of cancer, but also causes heart disease and stroke.³⁵ Conventional HRT invented by Wyeth-Ayerst really *does* cause these side effects. The hormones made in your body really *don't*.

The Age of Aquarius

There is an alternative to hormonelike drugs available. The real bio-identical hormones (that Wyeth-Ayerst altered in the lab to create the unnatural HRT drugs) can be had *in their pure form* by prescription. More than likely your doctor has never heard of Natural Hormones. But getting your hands on the real McCoy isn't the only problem. Getting *enough* hormones to make yourself a real, normal, *physiologically rhythmic* cycle just like when you were young—that's the problem.

It wasn't just the chemical composition of the drugs in PremPro that made us sick. It was the dosage, too. Real hormones in your body pulse in waves of seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, and seasons because we have evolved as an integral part of nature and the cosmos, not in opposition to it. The rhythm of the planet we live on is in us, literally. Hormonal rhythms echo the pulse of life, of hearts beating, of lungs expanding and contracting, even of the gait of our walk. The hormones give us menstrual periods that count the beat of time for women month after month, year after year. Men, too, have rhythm. Young males peak hormonally in the fall and drop low in the spring after their testosterone kicks in.³⁶ Everything on Earth does. Birds sing and bees dance because of their respective testosterone levels.³⁷⁻³⁸ There's the music again.

The only primate besides us that sings is the gibbon. Gibbons are monogamous because resources are scarce and a pair bond does a better job of defending a territory, ensuring the survival of offspring. As it is in all venues,

female selection is the rule. The female chooses a territory, maybe one with a great fruit tree, and then invites a male to join her. She does this by rising at first light and singing a very, very complicated song. A cacophony of males try to return her call. The male who is smart enough to sing her song back note for note wins himself a life—children, a home, and a wife.³⁹

Take a moment to remember. Before puberty, music was nice. But after your hormones kicked in, music was everything. Life, surely, still has a beat, but we aren't dancing to it. The big question is: How come no one's talking about the fact that we've lost our rhythm? When our menstrual cycles dwindle and cease, the hormones that kept us in step with each other to mate and survive are gone.

The Beat Goes On

The world as we know it, from bacteria to blue whales, the whole universe, in fact, is all about timing, within each of us and in relation to everything outside us. The individual rhythms overlap into larger patterns that then again weave in and out of each other. Human beings swim in this sea of rhythms; the examples are myriad.

The moon provides more light with its full face and sure enough, as the new moon ends, every twenty-eight days females bleed.⁴⁰ Babies in utero synchronize their movements to the sound of their mothers' voices. This sets up a pattern of emotional response to mom calling you for dinner as your very brain architecture is being laid down.⁴¹ More babies are born between midnight and 6:00 A.M. than any other time period, thanks to our circadian clock.⁴²⁻⁶⁰ The circadian clock in every cell measures one spin of the planet, or twenty-four hours.

Instrumental music is just an expression of those rhythms, ineffable to some, but quite tangible to others. Because there is a beat to it, it is generally accepted that the rhythm originates in the music, but more likely music is a highly specialized releaser of the rhythms already inherent in the listener. We, and all life on Earth, are dancers to a tune we've heard so long that we've forgotten we're dancing.⁶¹

A scientist named Hans Selye asserted that it's only when we *can't* dance that we get sick. He called it "perennial adaptation."⁶² His hypothesis was that illness only occurs when an organism is stuck in a constant effort