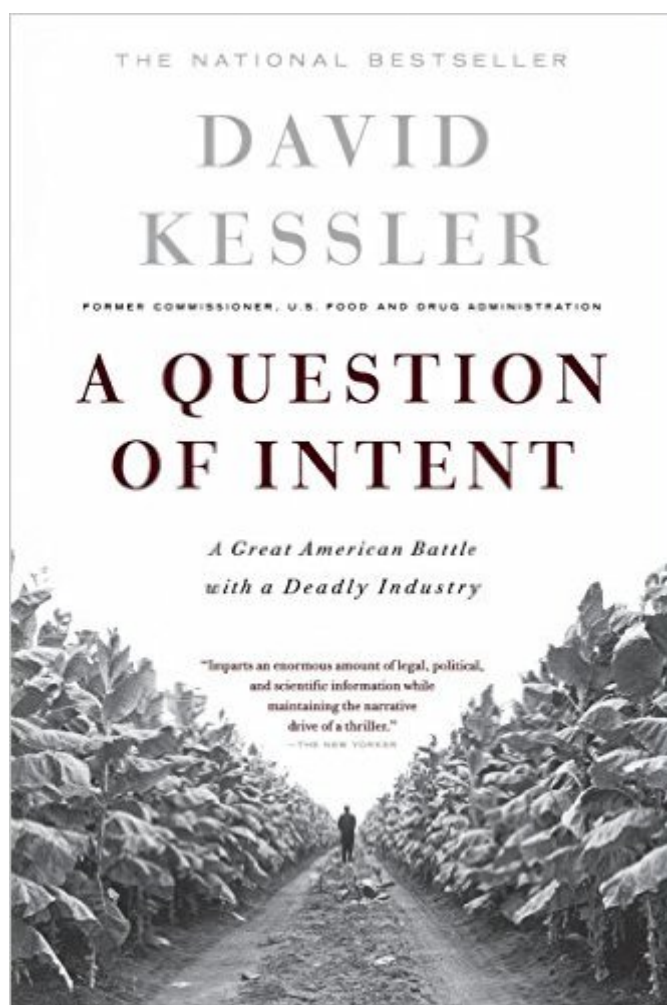


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# A Question Of Intent: A Great American Battle With A Deadly Industry (Great American Battle With With A Deadly Industry)



## Synopsis

Tobacco companies had been protecting their turf for decades. They had congressmen in their pocket. They had corrupt scientists who made excuses about nicotine, cancer and addiction. They had hordes of lawyers to threaten anyone inside the industry or out who posed a problem. They had a whole lot of money to spend. And they were good at getting people to do what they wanted them to do. After all, they had already convinced millions of Americans to take up an addictive, unhealthy, and potentially deadly habit. David Kessler didn't care about all that. In this book he tells for the first time the thrilling detective story of how the underdog FDA while safeguarding the nation's food, drugs, and blood supply finally decided to take on one of the world's most powerful opponents, and how it won. Like *A Civil Action* or *And the Band Played On*, *A Question of Intent* weaves together science, law, and fascinating characters to tell an important and often unexpectedly moving story. We follow Kessler's team of investigators as they race to find the clues that will allow the FDA to assert jurisdiction over cigarettes, while the tobacco companies and their lawyers fight back hard. Full of insider information and drama, told with wit, and animated by its author's moral passion, *A Question of Intent* reads like a Grisham thriller, with one exception everything in it is true.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

It's funny that when I purchased this book, I never really suspected that it would be quite the

page-turner that it is. In this book, David Kessler (former head of the FDA) speaks first of his agency's enlightenment that it COULD and SHOULD fight Big Tobacco and then of the fight itself. This is gripping and compelling a story that public policy has to offer: it's hard to remember that ten years ago, the tobacco industry still held that nicotine a)was not addictive and b)did not cause cancer; this book shows how these myths were finally put to bed in the public sphere. Second, this is a neat story. Kessler has much more of a knack for putting words down on a page than one would expect for a medical doctor (perhaps his wife, whom he declares was a fan of Anthony Trollope, rubbed off on him!) He puts together a story that is worthy of John Grisham; seeing that Erin Brockovich became one of the big pictures of the past twelve months, this fella might have something going for himself here....Setting all of these aside, this book has something to offer for people interested in how the American political system works. In much the same way as books like 'Boomerang!' chronicled the downfall of the centrally-funded health care system also circa the early Clinton-era, this book deals with one of the great successes (or a part thereof) of the same period. This is a great read and entirely worth buying in hardcover....Please buy this book....

A great read, one of those books that justly deserves to be called a page-turner. If any doubt remained about the character of the tobacco industry and the damage it inflicts, *A Question of Intent* lays it to rest. Funding volunteer firefighters who then make public statements downplaying the risk of cigarettes as a source of fire? Adding chocolate to tobacco because when burned it gives off a chemical that may make it easier to inhale? Identifying Islamic religious leaders who oppose an interpretation of the Qur'an that would lead to a ban on tobacco use? Who knew?But this is no predictable polemic, far from it. It's more like a detective story, with shrouded informants, driven investigators, and the pursuit of long-shot leads and buried clues. David Kessler comes across as agile, self-effacing, and very smart, with a surprisingly ironic sense of humor. *A Question of Intent* is about more than tobacco. It is also about the education of a political neophyte and an insider's look at Washington -- that messy, unseemly place where someone with vision, commitment and wiles can still make a difference.

This is a wonderful book that should appeal to tobacco warriors and the general public alike. It reads like a novel, yet its copiously documented throughout.. It will be equally at home on your coffee table and as required reading in graduate schools of public poicy.Whether you agree with what David Kessler did or you don't, the message here goes far beyond tobacco. At a time when there is a feeling that government no longer matters, this book shows how a small group of people,in one

government agency, led by a leader who believed deeply in the law and his cause, can make a difference.. That Kessler's tobacco war ended in defeat with a 5 to 4 vote in the Supreme Court provides an eerie parallel to recent events. But no one felt good about the election mess in Florida. Most Americans, liberal or conservative, will feel pretty good when they finish this book. It shows that leadership can still make a difference and that our government can still matter.

I've always been a little suspicious of the anti-tobacco crowd -- it seemed a bit Puritanical, a bit holier-than-thou -- so I admit to approaching *A Question of Intent* with a chip on my shoulder. By the time I had raced through this book -- which literally kept me reading through the night -- my view had changed dramatically. Like many Americans, I had bought into the myths created by the tobacco industry to protect its own vast profits. My perspective had been almost painfully naïve. There's nothing inherently glamorous about holding a smoking stick, but the industry's aggressive and long-lasting public relations campaigns have somehow convinced us that there is. The argument that people smoke of their own free will is unsupportable when the industry works to addict the nation's children, but we've allowed rhetoric to persuade us otherwise. The FDA's efforts to bring this industry into line through commonsense regulations that carefully avoid the taint of Prohibition are chronicled here, with the author revealing a deft touch for detail, a strategic mind worthy of Bismarck, and no small degree of humor. And the decision by the Supreme Court to undercut Kessler's effort (the same five judges who voted to defeat the FDA's tobacco initiative also made that dead-of-night decision to cheat Al Gore of a fair election count) will surely go down in the history books as a great opportunity squandered. Rather than showing the courage to change public health forever, the Court chose to bolster the profit margins of an industrial killer. That's something we should all remember next time we go to the polls.

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