

[Major Asbestos Industrial Company Is Protagonist Of Killer Company](#)

(Posted by Tom Lamb at www.AsbestosHUB.com on September 21, 2009; see <http://bit.ly/KUp4y>)

Earlier this year, ABC Australia reporter Matt Peacock published his book *Killer Company: James Hardie Exposed*. The book centers on James Hardie, a major industrial company responsible for numerous asbestos-related diseases, such as mesothelioma. Mesothelioma is painful, fatal, and has no cure.

Matt Peacock began investigating the company and its devious practices in 1977. After years of research, his disturbing findings are detailed in this book. Since as far back as 1935, when the first two asbestos-related disease cases were presented to the company, James Hardie has worked very hard at evading any responsibility in spite of overwhelming evidence that they knew of the dangers surrounding asbestos. From a *Killer Company* book review by Phil Shannon at [Green Left](#):

Hardie's company doctor, Terry McCullagh, was part of the "old boys network" in the industry and the bureaucracy that served to guard the interests of Hardie. McCullagh cynically recommended the employment of older men because they were more likely to die from other causes before asbestos diseases killed them.

McCullagh was also a key member of the Commonwealth body that set lax standards for asbestos dust concentrations in Australia, despite telling Hardie factory managers in 1966 that there was "fairly conclusive evidence" that "there is no safe upper limit for asbestos dust".

To this day, the company has managed to weasel its way, time and time again, into accepting meager settlement terms which leave them profitable and the afflicted former employee in ruin. Phil Shannon reports, "...prosecution by the Australian Securities and Investment Commission under civil (not criminal) penalty proceedings resulted in only pathetic fines, barely what a director would make in just one month. Shamefully, no government has ever laid criminal charges against Hardie, including its chair for 23 years since 1973, John Reid."

It is amazing that a company which so blatantly deceived, not only its employees, but the members of the public surrounding its factories, has been allowed to remain in business following these unethical business practices. The process of justice is a slow one which, especially in this case, often outlives its initiators.

According to Phil Shannon:

Peacock has dedicated his book to "the trade unionists whose often lonely fight has slowly restricted the use of asbestos in many parts of the world". Without the unions, added Banton (who died in 2007), Hardie workers would have got "diddly-squat".

Peacock has also dedicated his book to asbestos-disease sufferers, whose stories are ever-present in a compassionate but angry book, reminding us of the human cost of, and human spirit of resistance to, Hardie's serial corporate depravity.

If you are interested, you can find *Killer Company: James Hardie Exposed* at [Matt Peacock's web page](#).

Attorney [Tom Lamb](#) represents people in personal injury and wrongful death cases involving mesothelioma or other asbestos cancers. The above article was posted originally on his blog, **Asbestos HUB** – with active links and readers' comments.
<http://AsbestosHUB.com>