



# Paralyzing Summer: The True Story of the Ann Arbor V.A. Hospital Poisonings and Deaths

*S. Martin Lindenauer, Elizabeth Oneal*

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In the summer of 1975, an alarming number of patients at the Ann Arbor Veterans Administration Hospital began experiencing mysterious respiratory failures that left ten dead and over thirty more clinging to life. Doctors struggled to determine the cause of the attacks, and further analysis revealed each of the victims' intravenous drip bags had been contaminated with a powerful muscle relaxant named Pavulon—a drug traditionally used in hospitals when inserting patient breathing tubes in preparation for surgery. The discovery of Pavulon was particularly disturbing because hospital safeguards made it unlikely the chemical had been introduced to patients' drip bags by mistake. This suggested deliberate poisoning, but with no apparent connection between the victims, the motive behind the crime was unclear. The tangled investigation that followed gripped the nation's attention, particularly after the FBI narrowed its focus to two improbable suspects: a pair of well-liked nurses from the hospital's intensive care unit. Both were of Filipino decent, and the national media speculated racism was a major factor in the scrutiny placed on the nurses. Drawing extensively from court documents, news coverage from the time, and interviews with participants, Zibby Oneal and S. Martin Lindenauer's *Paralyzing Summer* presents a gripping account of the baffling case, following the incredible twists and turns that unfolded over a two and a half year period starting July 1975.

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