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As We
SEE IT

Inventor of Safer Automobile

Destroyed by Federal Government

By William Faloon

In this month's issue, we honor an American hero who was prosecuted, bankrupted, and driven out of the United States for the "crime" of designing a less expensive and safer automobile.

Members of the Life Extension Foundation are well aware of how the FDA has caused tens of millions of Americans to die by:

1. **Denying the approval of lifesaving medications**
2. **Allowing the sale of lethal drugs**
3. **Censoring scientific data about disease prevention.**



by William Faloon

Government-induced death, however, is not limited to FDA malfeasance. A look back 58 years ago reveals how illegal governmental actions delayed the introduction of automotive safety features that could have spared hundreds of thousands of lives and prevented millions of crippling injuries.



Preston Tucker in his office displaying an advertisement for his cars.

Just as the FDA functions today to protect the entrenched pharmaceutical industry, the Securities and Exchange Commission in the late 1940s made certain that only the big automotive companies would stay in business.

Life Extension has long sought to preserve a historical record of atrocities committed against the citizenry by our own government. The corruption scandal you are about to read reveals how the federal government illegally conspired to deny Americans access to safer, better, and less expensive automobiles.

GIVING THE US A TECHNOLOGICAL EDGE IN WWII

Some of history's most interesting and incredible figures are, for one reason or another, names that most of us do not recognize. One such individual was **Preston Tucker**, a visionary, innovator, and entrepreneur.

When World War II broke out in Europe, the Belgian government contracted with Tucker to design a fast-moving armored car. Tucker developed a vehicle with a gun turret that could travel at speeds topping 80 miles per hour, far in excess of the design specifications. Regrettably, the Nazis invaded Belgium before the armored car could be mass produced.

Since the Tucker armored car was so much faster than any tank, the army decided that it was impractical to use. The United States military, however, recognized the value of the highly mobile gun turret that Tucker invented. The military liked it so much that they made it a standard feature on every bomber produced for the rest of the war. The little revolving twin gun turrets you see on the top of the B-17 Flying Fortress, the B-24 Liberator, and other American bombers are all examples of the "Tucker Turret." The Navy used the Tucker Turret on its PT boats and landing ships as well.

MAKING A DRAMATICALLY SAFER AUTOMOBILE

When World War II ended, **Preston Tucker** recognized that American car companies were making unsafe and unreliable vehicles that cost too much. Tucker set out to design an automobile that would incorporate numerous safety features, outperform any other car on the market, and save consumers money.^{1,2}

The Tucker automobile included many previously unknown safety features: a cushion-edged crash chamber, four-wheel braking traction for panic stops, safety glass that popped out in the event of a crash, a collapsible steering column, and, believe it or not . . . seat belts!³⁻⁵

The Tucker chassis had a steel reinforced V-shape front so that unless you hit someone head on, you would deflect to one side. Tucker's car had three welded roll bars to protect the passengers in case the vehicle rolled over, steel bulkheads in the front and rear to protect against front and rear collisions, and a wraparound safety frame to protect against side collisions. Tucker's was one of the first cars with independent suspension to reduce the risk of the driver losing control of the steering.⁶

Another unique feature of the Tucker automobile was a center headlight that turned with the steering wheel, thus enabling the driver to see at night when turning corners on mountain roads or into one's driveway. Tucker felt that turning corners at night was hazardous because it was the only time you really could not see where you were going.

Preston Tucker was not shy about his ambitions of taking over the US automotive industry by delivering safer, better-performing cars. Tucker's flamboyant promotions did not go unnoticed by the big automakers or their political cronies in the federal government.



A 1948 Tucker sedan, number 1039.

AUTO ESTABLISHMENT RESISTED INNOVATION

Making a safe, reliable family automobile was a radical idea in the late 1940s. As a result, the established car manufacturers considered **Preston Tucker's** car a threat to their products, and with good reason. Tucker's car could be built for a fraction of what it cost the mainstream carmakers to build one. His vision was of an automobile on technology's cutting edge, incorporating an aluminum, fuel-injected engine and multitudes of safety features, some of which are still not found in automobiles sold today.

Preston Tucker developed a car so far ahead of its time that the large car manufacturers felt compelled to use corrupt federal bureaucrats to shut him down. Tucker was constantly forced to switch course as the federal government did everything in its power to incarcerate him and destroy his company.

Despite interference from multiple federal agencies, Tucker succeeded in acquiring the largest manufacturing plant in the world. The site itself covered 475 acres and included additional buildings that functioned as iron and casting factories.²

When the Chicago Daily News paid a visit to the plant to see if it was real or just a show (as the SEC alleged), the paper reported hundreds of acres of engines, frames, body stampings, wheels, tires, shock absorbers, batteries, and finished car bodies on the assembly line. Tucker's plant was clearly ready to take on the entrenched automobile establishment when the Chicago Daily News reported:

"The Tucker plant . . . appears ready to start production of cars."⁷

Tucker hoped to start full production if the government would just get off his back. The Tucker automobile gained even greater notoriety when an acknowledged authority on cars took a test drive and published a report in *Mechanix Illustrated* that stated:

"Tucker is building an automobile! And, brother, it's a real automobile! I want to go on the record here and now as saying that it is the most amazing American car I have ever seen to date. This car is real dynamite and if proven reliable, will make every other car made in America look like Harrigan's hack with the wheels off."⁸

The *Mechanix Illustrated* article apparently caused panic in the auto industry, and the government stepped up its brutal investigation of the Tucker Automobile Corporation. The SEC sent an armada of investigators into the Tucker plant, harassing employees and plodding through every single record at the plant. The SEC's assault went on day after day, week after week, and lasted more than a year. At one time, there were more SEC investigators in the Tucker plant than employees. *Newsweek* magazine reported that 40 FBI agents were inquiring around the country about every activity of Preston Tucker and his associates.⁹

The government's relentless assault put a financial squeeze on Tucker that grew tighter by the hour. Who would want to extend credit or do business with the Tucker Corporation when FBI agents were showing up with threats of criminal prosecution?

The government alleged that other than the prototype, no Tucker car of any kind had been produced, nor could be produced. These baseless allegations were made despite the existence of dozens of Tucker automobiles that were built during the time the SEC itself was inside the plant. While the government was disseminating these spurious allegations, the editor of *True* magazine tested a Tucker car and published an article stating:

"The car will do 125 miles per hour. It will deliver 26.2 miles to the gallon when driven at 45 m.p.h. It will accelerate from a standing start to 30 m.p.h. in 3.5 seconds, from 0 to 60 in ten flat. It is the safest car ever built, period." 10

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THE GOVERNMENT SEIZES TUCKER'S PLANT

Despite these positive news stories, the federal government ordered Tucker's plant to be shut down. A month later, a grand jury was seated for the purpose of indicting Preston Tucker on charges that he defrauded investors and had nothing that resembled an automobile. According to the federal government, the Tucker car did not exist!

After hearing dozens of SEC witnesses, the grand jury indicted Preston Tucker and his associates. The federal government then ordered the immediate seizure of the Tucker plant, since it was allegedly acquired from the proceeds of fraud. The plant was later liquidated for pennies on the dollar (that the government kept). The Tucker Corporation, unfortunately, was destroyed even before Preston Tucker's trial on criminal charges began.

THE GOVERNMENT PRESENTS ITS CASE

The SEC obtained a criminal indictment against Preston Tucker based on the way he raised money to finance his company. Tucker impressed so many business people with his superior automobile design that he was able to sell dealerships before he could even make the car. Investors later poured more than \$15 million into the Tucker Corporation.

In the courtroom, prosecutors told the jury that Preston Tucker was a con man who took investors' money and never intended to produce any cars. The prosecutors went so far as to say that Tucker never built any cars, despite their knowledge that he had indeed built 37 of them while under relentless siege by the SEC and FBI.

At trial, government prosecutors paraded one SEC witness after another, attacking design flaws in the Tucker prototype car—flaws that had nothing to do with the fraud allegations. These initial design flaws had long ago been corrected to the extent that dozens of Tucker cars were in operation during the trial—cars that the prosecutors said did not exist!

Tucker's genius once again came through for him. Near the end of the trial, he surrounded the courthouse with his "Tucker Torpedos," the name of his flagship car. These were the very cars that the federal government said that he never intended to build, nor could ever build.

The corrupt prosecutor (who was later jailed for securities fraud in a different case) even tried to prevent the jury from looking out the window to see the cars the government said could not be built.

Auto Companies Now Suffer Consequences of Lack of Innovation

American auto companies made billions over the years by suppressing the development of superior automobiles that could compete against their inferior products.

As most of us know, the Japanese eventually overtook American cars in consumers' perception of innovation and reliability, while many European cars have developed a reputation for superior safety.

Had the American car companies spent their resources competing with Preston Tucker by building better and safer cars, perhaps they would not find themselves in the economic predicament they are in today.

Demand for the Tucker automobile was so strong that a sales office was set up in New York City to handle the numerous international inquiries that were coming in to the Tucker plant (near Chicago). Had Tucker not been destroyed by the federal government, the United States could have become a net "exporter" of automobiles today!

TUCKER'S TEAM PULLS A SURPRISE

The government spent almost three months throwing every piece of dirt against Preston Tucker it could find. When it came time for Tucker's side to present their case, they did something rather surprising. Tucker's lawyers simply told the jury that the government had not presented any evidence that a crime had ever been committed. Therefore, his attorneys argued, Preston Tucker and his associates had no reason to present a defense.

If convicted on all counts, Preston Tucker could have faced more than 100 years in jail. Within 17 hours, however, the jury returned and announced "not guilty" to all the charges leveled against Preston Tucker and his associates.²

GOVERNMENT STILL SUCCEEDED IN DESTROYING TUCKER

Tucker won a legal battle against overwhelming odds, but he had already lost the war. His business was in bankruptcy and his production plant was long gone.

Assembly lines, finished cars, parts, materials, and tooling were still there, ready to roll. The problem was that they were all under the complete control of government-appointed bankruptcy "trustees" who eventually auctioned them to pay the debts that had accumulated during the time the government seized the plant (and prosecuted Preston Tucker). Years later, it was proven that the Tucker Corporation had far more assets than debts, but at the time, the government was determined to make sure that no more Tucker automobiles were ever produced.

A total of 51 Tucker Torpedos were eventually produced. Tucker's "car of tomorrow" was so well constructed that 47 of those 51 cars still remain operational to this day, more than a half century later.

After being driven out of the United States by the US government's strangulation of his business, Tucker started over again in Brazil. Like most American men of that era, Tucker was a heavy smoker, and died of lung cancer before he could mass produce his superior automobile in South America.

HOW MANY AMERICAN LIVES LOST?

Preston Tucker figured out how to build safer cars a generation ahead of his time. Not only did Tucker design a safer car, but he had the unique personal ability to promote and market safety, possibly better than any automaker in history. Tucker was so successful in convincing Americans about his superior automobile that he had waiting lists to buy his first cars.

The question begs, if Preston Tucker were not illegally shut down by the federal government in the late 1940s, how many American lives would have been saved in the ensuing years? According to a report published by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, "vehicle safety technologies saved an estimated 328,551 lives from 1960 through 2002."¹¹

In preparing this report, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration stated that it "evaluated the effectiveness of virtually all the lifesaving technologies introduced in passenger cars, pickup trucks, sport utility vehicles . . . from 1960 to 2002."¹¹



Preston Tucker stands between two models of his car, one front view, one rear view.

Most of these "lifesaving technologies" the government now glorifies, however, were first developed by Preston Tucker, the same guy the federal government in 1949 illegally prosecuted (using perjured testimony), bankrupted, and eventually ran out of the country.

Today, the federal government states that "lifesaving technologies" (many first conceived of by Preston Tucker) prevented 24,000 Americans from dying in 2002.¹¹

By destroying the Tucker Automobile Corporation, the federal government caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Americans who otherwise could have been saved by the safety features Preston Tucker built into his cars.

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MILLIONS OF CRIPPLING INJURIES

Most car accidents do not kill people. There are, however, millions of serious injuries suffered each year in automobile accidents. Some people suffer pain, disfigurement, and crippling disabilities for the rest of their lives as a result of car crashes.

Preston Tucker recognized the dangers of being in an automobile and designed a car that would have spared millions of Americans bodily injuries and death. The federal government did everything in its power to deny Americans access to Tucker's automobiles, and the total number of Americans who have needlessly suffered as a result is incalculable.

WHO DEFRAUDED INVESTORS? THE GOVERNMENT!

The Securities and Exchange Commission claimed it was "protecting" investors from securities "fraud" perpetrated by Preston Tucker. Yet the Tucker Automobile Corporation was on the verge of mass producing the Tucker Torpedo, and had nationwide dealerships and 100,000 eager customers waiting to buy Tucker's cars. There is not a car company in the world today with this many Americans desperately wanting to purchase its first models.

Preston Tucker was ready to take on the entire automotive industry with a better, safer, and less expensive car when the federal government indicted him and forced the closure of the assembly factory into which investors had poured over \$15 million.

Prosecutors had the nerve to tell jurors that Preston Tucker had defrauded these investors, when it was corrupt federal officials who obtained a perjured indictment that guaranteed a 100% loss to all those who provided funding to the Tucker Corporation. The federal government was clearly protecting the economic interests of the large auto companies against Preston Tucker and not the hard-earned money American citizens invested in the Tucker Automobile Corporation.

In the United States today, various governmental agencies claim to be "protecting" Americans against all kinds of so-called "unapproved" medical therapies. Based on the sordid history of regulatory agencies that are beholden to the pharmaceutical industry, a clear analogy can be drawn between the governmental atrocities committed against Preston Tucker in the 1940s and the numerous "criminal" charges that continue to be brought against alternative medical practitioners today.

The media seems to focus on any kind of unfavorable report about foods and supplements, while ignoring virtually every single positive published study. Interestingly, pharmaceutical companies spend tens of millions of dollars a year to influence the media. Preston Tucker was often viciously attacked in the media by journalists who were thought to be in the pocket of the big auto companies.

Illegal and Unethical Acts Perpetrated Against Preston Tucker

From the very beginning, Preston Tucker ran into opposition from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), an agency of the federal government. The first sales of franchises (the right to sell future Tucker automobiles, if and when they were produced) brought an SEC investigation. Tucker complained that selling dealerships was not the same as issuing stock, but the SEC investigated anyway.

The SEC later caused costly delays in approving the initial Tucker stock offering. By selling stock in Tucker Corporation to the public, Tucker was inviting them to join his enterprise, to become part-owners and accept the risk of ownership—by sharing the profits of success or the losses of failure. Funds generated from dealership and stock sales provided the money to design and build the first Tuckers in 1948.

The SEC, however, never stopped harassing Preston Tucker. The established auto industry did not want new competition, and their "Senator from Detroit," Homer Ferguson, led the battle to crush the Tucker Corporation. Further energizing the investigation of Tucker was SEC Commissioner Harry McDonald, also from Detroit. Regional SEC Chief Thomas B. Han

apparently hated Tucker and was relentless in his efforts to bring him down. The SEC may have spent more money investigating the Tucker Corporation than the Tucker Corporation spent designing and building the “car of the future.”

Preston Tucker’s dream to build the car of the future was extinguished by corrupt politicians and government bureaucrats who made sure that a superior automobile would not compete against the established automakers.

BUREAUCRACY PREVENTS CANCER CENTER FROM OPENING!

In 1999, I announced in this column that Life Extension was setting up a medical center that would provide every single scientifically documented cancer therapy. We built and furnished a 4,400-square-foot medical center, but it could not even get off the ground.

One reason was that no matter how hard we tried to comply with the law, practicing comprehensive oncology was virtually impossible in the regulated environment imposed on physicians today.

The government has succeeded in suffocating medical innovation by erecting enormous bureaucratic barriers. Physicians with novel ideas who try to bypass today’s labyrinth of Byzantine rules risk not only their license to practice medicine, but also their personal liberty.

The chilling effects of government restrictions on medical advancement are nothing short of paralyzing. Why should any doctor today risk everything he has to provide patients with improved care?

From One of Preston Tucker’s Last Interviews

“When government agencies become tools of private monopoly, individual initiative and enterprise are doomed.”¹²

—Preston Tucker

Car Life magazine, December 1955

Medical oncologists make big money setting up chemotherapy centers that provide only FDA-approved drugs. While the failure rate of these drugs is frighteningly high, chemo drugs are approved by the FDA and fully reimbursed by Medicare and most private insurance plans. Oncologists have no incentive to make heroic attempts to utilize novel cancer treatments, which insurance will not pay for and which the government and media condemn.

When Life Extension tried to hire medical oncologists to work at our medical center, they all were impressed with our innovative approaches to cancer treatment. None of them, however, was willing to risk his license or sacrifice his lucrative “chemotherapy bonuses” by

prescribing the kinds of multimodal therapies we recommended. These oncologists did say that if we ever set up our facility, they would send their family members to us rather than expose them to the mainstream oncology they practice for a living.

NEVER FORGET THE PAST . . . OR YOU MAY DIE AS A RESULT!

There is nothing we can do today to reverse the heinous criminal acts perpetrated against Preston Tucker by our own government. We can, however, recognize that big business continues to improperly use federal agencies to suppress innovation in a way that causes tremendous consumer injury.

This month, we report on how a multibillion-dollar drug company—Wyeth—is trying to use the FDA to stop compounding pharmacies from selling bioidentical estrogen drugs. Wyeth makes the drugs Premarin® and Prempro®, which have been shown to increase risks of breast cancer,¹³⁻²⁶ heart attack,²⁷⁻³⁴ stroke,^{35,36} and dementia.³⁷⁻³⁹ Premarin® consists of conjugated estrogens extracted from the urine of pregnant horses. Compounding pharmacies offer natural estrogen compounds (for far less money) that have not been shown to cause these lethal side effects.

Instead of coming up with a safer estrogen drug, Wyeth would prefer that the FDA vanquish the competition, leaving the estrogen drug market wide open for Premarin®. Educated women often refuse to take Premarin® because of its lethal side effects, yet if Wyeth has its way, conventional doctors will prescribe lots more of this proven carcinogen.

What Wyeth is doing is not unusual. Big drug companies have historically used the FDA to suppress lower-cost competition. This fact is most easily demonstrated by the FDA’s recent mass seizure of lower-cost prescription drugs Americans had ordered from Canada. The FDA contends it is “protecting” consumers from potential counterfeit medications. The reality is that the FDA is protecting drug company profits, just like the SEC protected the auto giants in the late 1940s by destroying Preston Tucker.

For longer life,



William Faloon

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