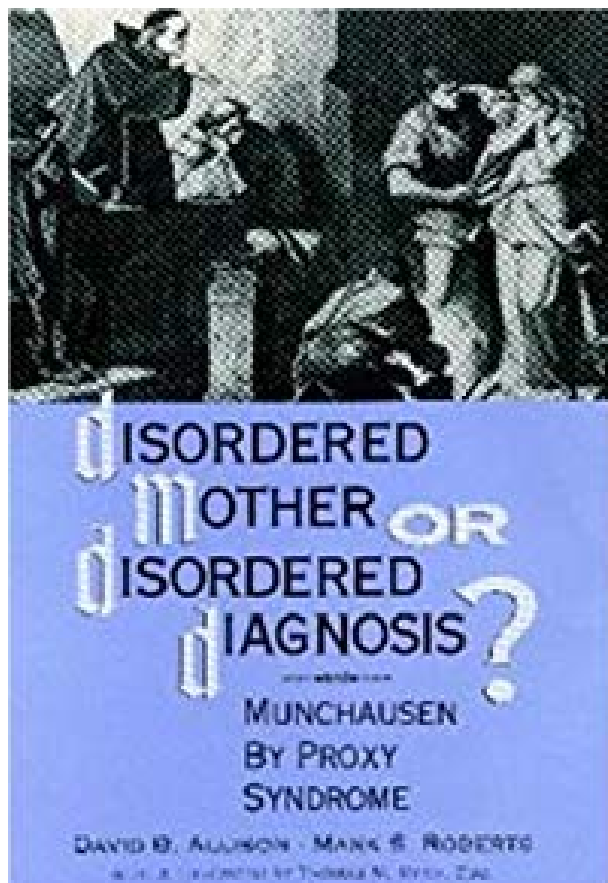


Disordered Mother or Disordered Diagnosis: Munchausen by Proxy Syndrome



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The diagnosis of Munchausen By Proxy Syndrome (MBPS) conjures up an eerie spectacle: a disturbed mother, while ostensibly seeking medical assistance, secretly induces physical illnesses in her help child in order to receive attention from a caring, even loving, physician. This putative "syndrome," which horrifically combines the elusiveness of the classic Munchausen Syndrome patient seeking care for nonexistent illness with the evils of child abuse, has been the subject of numerous books, television dramas, FBI warnings, and recent court cases. Yet, despite the widespread conviction among legal and psychiatric experts that Munchausen By Proxy Syndrome actually exists, the "syndrome" is specious, the evidence sustaining it insubstantial and logically flawed. This is the startling conclusion of *Disordered Mother or Disordered Diagnosis?* Beginning with a thorough review of the original literature on Munchausen patients, authors David Allison and Mark Roberts demonstrate in detail how, from the outset, psychiatric descriptions of this alleged condition have been thoroughly circular. *Disordered Mother or Disordered Diagnosis?* is essential reading for feminist scholars and clinicians, for social historians, sociologists, and jurists, indeed for all who care about the plight of disadvantaged mothers and the rights of medical patients in our society.