

**THE LASSA WARD:
ONE MAN'S FIGHT AGAINST ONE OF THE WORLD'S DEADLIEST DISEASES
(St. Martin's Press; May 2009; Hardcover)
A memoir by Ross I. Donaldson, MD, MPH**

Dr. Ross I. Donaldson is a UCLA medical professor and works in one of Los Angeles's main trauma centers, specializing in emergency medicine and global health. Extensive travels have taken him via tugboats and tuk-tuks—through distant revolutions, landmined fields, and warring countries. He has been a humanitarian in some of the world's most dangerous places, a NASA expedition doctor to one of the planet's highest lakes, and the caregiver to some of humanity's poorest people.

The recipient of numerous academic honors, Dr. Donaldson is an internationally invited speaker and has appeared on television and cable. He is the chief editor of the upcoming Tarascon Medical Translation Handbook, an aid helping healthcare workers communicate with their foreign speaking patients in 18 different languages, and is interested academically in the provision of medical care in crisis areas.

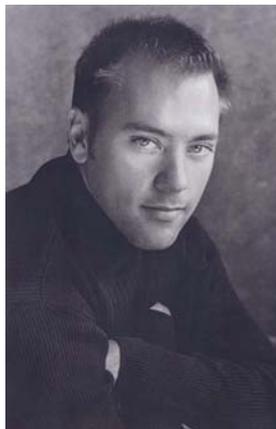
Dr. Donaldson's most recent international work involves frequent trips to Iraq, where he is helping to build an emergency medical system for that country's traumatized civilians. When in the States, he resides in Venice Beach, California.

About the Memoir

"No matter how low a cotton tree falls, it is still taller than grass."

Those are the words that humanitarian physician Dr. Aniru Conteh uses as he leaves a young medical student in charge of a ward filled with critically ill patients, in a hospital flooded with refugees from a runaway civil war. Ross Donaldson was that idealistic student, who gave up his comfortable life in the States to venture into Sierra Leone, a country ravaged by fighting and plagued by conflict streaming across the border from neighboring Liberia.

Photos (by Marion Ettlinger)



In a hospital ward with meager supplies, Ross has to find some way to care for patients afflicted with Lassa fever, a highly contagious hemorrhagic illness similar to Ebola. Forced to confront his own fear of the disease, he stands alone to make life-and-death decisions in the face of a never-ending onslaught of the sick inundating the hospital. Ultimately, he finds himself not only fighting for the lives of others but also for his own.

The Lassa Ward is the memoir of a young man studying to become a physician, while trying to make his way through a land where a battle against one of the world's deadliest diseases matches a struggle for human rights and human decency. It is also the story of a young doctor-in-the-making who rises to the occasion and does his best to save the patients in his care, but not without finally having to confront his own human frailty. (St. Martin's Press – half of the author proceeds go to charity).

Speaking Engagements

Dr. Donaldson is an accomplished presenter to consistently excellent reviews. He is comfortable with a range of speaking venues and topics, covering:

- Disaster Response (preparation, incident decisions, etc.)
- Emergency Medicine (heart attacks, stroke, trauma, etc.)
- Humanitarian Work (the American uninsured, urban health, aid work, etc.)
- Global Health (international politics, conflict areas, medical response, etc.)
- Traveler's Health/Expedition Medicine (precautions, altitude, scuba, etc.)
- Outbreaks/Communicable Disease (disease specifics, prevention, etc.)

Speaking Recommendations:

"I met Dr. Donaldson during the production of a National Geographic television program that I was producing in Los Angeles...As the producer of the program, I needed to find a medical expert who could translate the scientific and medical data we gathered into tangible information our audience could easily understand. Our search for this unique expert led us to Ross, and he more than perfectly fulfilled our needs. Not only could he fulfill the scientific needs of the show, he also was completely comfortable and natural on-camera – that's not something everyone can do.

In his medical practice his 'bedside manner' must be awesome because I never saw him exhibit anything other than a calm, relaxed and interested attitude and demeanor. I was very pleased to have Dr. Donaldson on our production's science team...he has my highest recommendation."

Robert G. Case

Television Producer, deCasa Productions