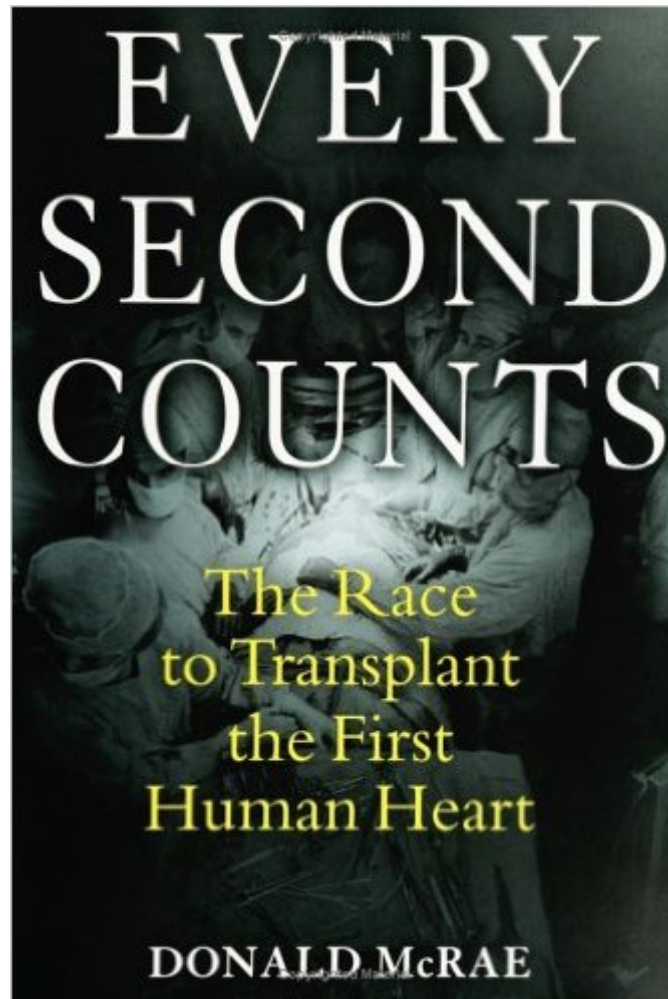


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# Every Second Counts: The Race To Transplant The First Human Heart



## Synopsis

In the tradition of *The Right Stuff* comes the true story of four men locked in a race to transplant the first human heart--a riveting tale of surgical daring, unyielding ambition, and scientific adventure. Many people remember the beaming face of Christiaan Barnard, the South African surgeon, after he performed the first human heart transplant, and captured the world's imagination. It was a stunning achievement, but he was not alone. In truth it was a four-way race, a fierce struggle fraught with passionate rivalry. The other three surgeons-Adrian Kantrowitz, Norman Shumway, and Richard Lower-were giants in the field, and by early December 1967 they and Barnard were each poised to snatch the victor's laurels. Each had spent years perfecting techniques that would lead to a successful heart transplant; each had monitored his chosen patient's condition, watching the clock, hoping a donor would be found in time. Some of these men were friends; others were enemies. Only one of them would be the first. From a dank, underequipped hospital in Cape Town to a cramped lab in San Francisco, the surgeons worked their own individual miracles to prolong their patients' lives, testing the limits of science, and nature itself. Like the classics of medical adventure-from James Watson's *The Double Helix* to John Barry's *The Great Influenza*-*Every Second Counts* is an unforgettable story of not only competition and fame, but of life and death.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

For those who lived through the sixties, the space race was a thrilling and defining endeavor. Few who remember it, however, will have forgotten another race that captured people's imaginations at

the same time, the race to get a human heart transplanted. Maybe, like the space race, it was overhyped and exaggerated, but like the space race, the competition was a sensation that had serious aspects and effects on the future. In *Every Second Counts: The Race to Transplant the First Human Heart* (Putnam), Donald McRae has told an important story, the exciting tale of pioneers competing on the frontiers of medicine, with the losers making lasting contributions and the winner descending into a tragic chaos fueled by fame. Norman Shumway, who had difficulty in getting into the field of heart surgery. After training, he got a job at the University of Stanford as "the guy in charge of the dialysis machine." The lowly post did bring him into contact with Richard Lower, who was doing experiments in a lab that leaked whenever it rained. The experiments involved surgery on dogs, removing a dog's heart and replacing it, for instance. In 1959, they transplanted a heart from one dog to another, and were ready to do it on humans by 1967. A year before, Adrian Kantrowitz, working in Brooklyn, had taken another tack on heart transplants, reasoning that doing the surgery on infants would be less liable for rejection complications. He was thwarted by others who would not let him take the still-beating heart from the doomed donor infant. Christiaan Barnard in South Africa did not have to worry about the overdue acceptance of brain death as being more important in defining an end of life than heart cessation.

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