



## Cooked: An Inner City Nursing Memoir

By Carol Karels

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In May 1971, Look magazine featured an article entitled "Chicago's Cook County Hospital: A Terrible Place." The article provided an in-depth look at the largest public hospital in the country, one located on Chicago's dangerous gang-controlled and drug-infested West Side. Months later, the author, then a naïve suburban teen, and one hundred other nursing students, began their training there, despite newspaper articles that warned that the hospital might close any day. At 'the County,' where nurse duties included swatting flies in the OR and delousing patients, both nurses and doctors were expected to provide care under the most desperate of circumstances. Cooked provides an inside look at the 2,000-bed ghetto hospital, often referred to as a "19th-century sick house," that provided health care to millions of Chicago's poor.

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