

# Behind the Knife: The Surgery Podcast

Kevin Kniery, Jason Bingham, John McClellan, Scott Steele

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Cam is a medical student at Waikato Hospital, who enjoys surgery, research, and attempting to find the best coffee in the city. He will be taking a break from his medical studies in 2017 to pursue a BMedSc(Hons) degree.

Behind the Knife is a podcast which aims to provide an in-depth and "behind the scenes" look at a broad range of surgical topics, dissecting the interesting, controversial and humanistic sides of surgery. Kevin Kniery, Jason Bingham, John McClellan, and Scott Steele host a myriad of high-profile guests, ranging from giants of surgery to up-and-coming surgeons at the cutting-edge of their craft. Episodes are published weekly, ranging in duration from half an hour to an hour, usually taking the form of an interview discussion with one or more guests.

The podcasts strike a great balance between clinical, academic, and other aspects of surgery. I was amazed by the wide range of specialties, covering Trauma, Fetal, Military, and Global Surgery and topics from "Failing Forward: A Poor Career Decision and How I Recovered" to "Stuff Surgery Interns Should Know" to "#ILookLikeASurgeon: Thoughts on diversity in medicine". A particular highlight for me was an interview with Melina Kibbe (Editor-in-Chief of JAMA Surgery), titled "The Art of Publishing", discussing surgical research and how to write a manuscript for an academic journal.

The podcast features some of the top surgeons in the world, including Kenneth Mattox, inventor of the Mattox manoeuvre, and Steven Wexner of the Wexner Incontinence Score. There is certainly no shortage of role models, with Justin Dimick (Past President of the Association for Academic Surgery) being particularly inspirational with his presentation titled "The Rookie Advantage", examining the potential embodied in young surgical researchers and their contributions to academic surgery.

One of my favourite parts in each episode was the "Final 5" questions. In this section, the guests reveal a few interesting things about themselves, including their favourite operating room music, hidden talents, and their most memorable trip or vacation. The Final 5 provided an alternate perspective on the lives of many of the distinguished guests, who are so well known for their surgical achievements, but are also incredibly well-rounded people.

A possible downside is that Behind the Knife's primary audience is surgical residents and attendings. Because of this, medical students may



find that some of the discussions are beyond the level usually expected of them. While this may be a deterrent for some students, it also provides an opportunity for those who are motivated to augment their surgical knowledge and skills.

In general, medical students often neglect podcasts as a learning tool for medical students, but in my experience they can be extremely valuable. Behind the Knife is free, and easily accessible on a smartphone, meaning episodes can be listened to whenever is convenient. It was great being able to listen to episodes during my morning or evening commute, in between lectures or tutorials, or just to fill in short gaps during my day at the hospital. Being a visual-kinaesthetic learner, I found I often needed to take notes to retain information, though podcasts would be ideal for those with an auditory-predominant learning style. Finally, while podcasts such as Behind the Knife shouldn't be the only resource medical students use to study, they are certainly a helpful adjunct for those wanting to extend their learning beyond that of the regular curriculum.

Would I recommend this podcast to other medical students? It depends on your background surgical knowledge. Preclinical students or those students in need of a surgery primer should listen to a podcast aimed specifically at students (such as Surgery 101). Behind the Knife is a great option for those motivated students aiming to pursue a surgical career and supplement their learning.

In conclusion, Behind the Knife will be remaining on the short list of podcasts I subscribe to, and I look forward to listening in on their future episodes. I also hope to see more of our New Zealand surgeons featured in episodes at some stage in the future.