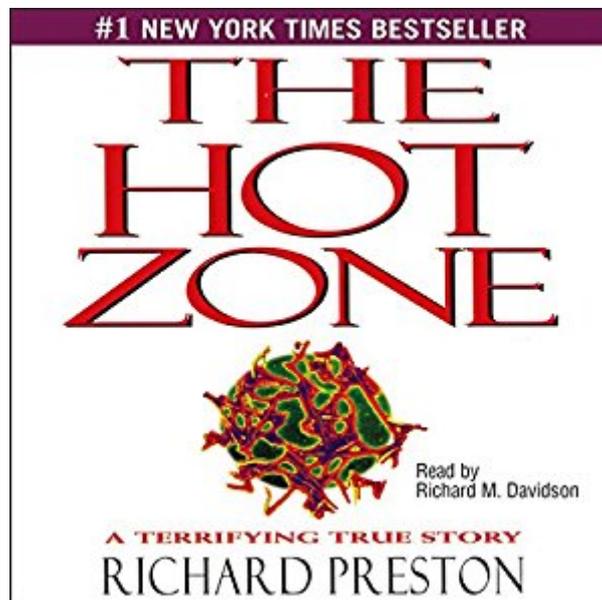


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The Hot Zone: A Terrifying True Story



Synopsis

A highly infectious, deadly virus from the central African rain forest suddenly appears in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. There is no cure. In a few days, 90 percent of its victims are dead. A secret military SWAT team of soldiers and scientists is mobilized to stop the outbreak of this exotic "hot" virus. The Hot Zone tells this dramatic story, giving a hair-raising account of the appearance of rare and lethal viruses and their "crashes" into the human race. Shocking, frightening, and impossible to ignore, The Hot Zone proves that truth really is scarier than fiction.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

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Customer Reviews

Richard Preston is not a horror novelist, but this will be one of the scariest stories you've ever read. The cause of all this terror is from little beasts that are only microns in size, filoviruses. "Hot Zone" discusses four of these viruses, Marburg, Ebola Sudan, Ebola Zaire, Ebola Reston. I first came across Preston in his New Yorker article, "Crisis in the Hot Zone" which is basically the cliff notes to this book. It piqued my interest and eventually led to me reading this book. Everyone knows that they should be afraid of Ebola. The Zaire strand only kills 90% of those it infects, in just a matter of day, in the worst way imaginable. Filoviruses are hemorrhagic viruses, causing those unfortunate enough to be infected to crash and bleed out. Preston goes into grisly detail about how these viruses work, and the symptoms that occur in humans. He traces the history of these viruses from their discovery. These are just set up for his main topic, the discovery of Ebola in Washington D.C. A monkey house in Reston Virginia is full of dying monkeys that apparently are infected with Ebola.

Preston tracks down the mystery behind this domestic infection. This book does bring up an all-important point; we are only an airplane ride away from the outbreak of a pandemic. It is very possible that a highly contagious disease may break out and cover the earth in a matter of days leaving a large portion of the population dead, making the premise behind Stephen King's novel "The Stand" not so far fetched after all. These filoviruses are very interesting, and Preston reveals them in such a way that you want to know more about them. The only hint I have to offer is, to avoid Intern's Disease, don't read this when you have a cold.

I read this book when it first came out in the 1990's. I'm writing this review now because, 1- the current (July 2014) outbreak of Ebola is "the deadliest in recorded history," and 2- I've NEVER forgotten the book. I can honestly say that in a way, it scarred me for life. The book terrified me. The thing that is so terrifying is the way the poor people who contract the disease die. It is just horrible. Once you start reading, you won't be able to put it down. But be warned, it is very disturbing. I really cannot think of anything on Earth more important than preventing the spread of Ebola. Please don't disagree until you have at least read this book.

In *THE HOT ZONE*, Richard Preston has woven epidemiological fact with the terrifying true story of how a strain of the Ebola virus came to the United States. He details various outbreaks of hemorrhagic fevers, traces them to their possible origins, and provides a basic education about viral evolution and forensics, all couched in narratives that will keep you turning page after page. After you have read his graphic descriptions of what happens to people who contract the deadlier strains of Ebola, you will understand fully just how dangerous the Reston, Virginia incident could have been. With its crisp language and pacing, *THE HOT ZONE* reads like an expert thriller novel, making its reality that much more horrifying. Not for the faint-hearted, this book will likely alter the way you view viruses and epidemics. I highly recommend this book for a general adult readership. (Teenagers under 16 may not be able to handle the highly disturbing descriptions Preston provides.) If you haven't read this book before, you should, especially now in this time of bioterrorism and global travel.

This was an interesting account of a biological incident at a monkey house near Washington DC, along with plenty of background information about the Marburg and Ebola viruses. I didn't mind the redundancy about which others have complained; the repetition of some of the information about viral functions prompted retention, along with stirring the imagination as to the effects of a killer

virus. After reading the book, I performed some web searches and found several sites advertising hiking excursions to Mt. Elgon's Kitum Cave in Africa, which is believed to be the home of the Ebola/Marburg strains, though it's presently unknown which animal is the natural host. Let me tell you, if you are sufficiently insane to visit Kitum Cave after reading *The Hot Zone*, then you are living proof of Darwin In Action. I liked the author's analogy about fatal viruses, such as Ebola and HIV, acting at the Earth's own antibodies, protecting the environment from encroachment by humans in places where the Earth doesn't want humans to be fiddling with things. Invasions of the deep rain forests and encounters with fatal biological agents therein are warnings for humans to stay away. Have everyone in your family read *The Hot Zone*, so that next time someone gets sick you will have all sorts of terminology to throw around the dinner table -- extreme amplification, crash-and-bleed-out and other delightful descriptions about the effects of disease on humans. Enjoy.

Ebola Virus' history and lots of information about how a virus gets its name (location of victim) and who gets to name the strain (researcher who isolates it) and how transmission pathways are determined and when Ebola first "jumped" across a room from infected to "clean" monkeys in a lab because it had aerosolized due to pressure-washing (sound familiar Dallas?). It tells how all fluids of ebola patients (including monkeys), rooms, toilets, floor drains, even the water from the sewer pipes from the sinks and showers the researchers have washed their hands with and shower off their suits with is BOILED then CHEMICALLY TREATED then ISOLATED and then something else...and I think of how many times that Dallas patient threw up into his residential sinks and toilets thus the municipal water system in Dallas. Then the cleaning crew power washes his bloody vomit from the sidewalk into the storm drain! Viruses seek out living hosts...many, if not most hosts they will not even kill...so who knows where those sewer viruses are now...oh, yeah, there are like a billion aggressive ebola seeking hosts in a drop the size of the period at the end of this sentence. Book describes military vets and how well trained they are to handle research into ebola. It's just a great book. Reads like a novel and not technical, but very accurate. Never dull! Covers the bat cave in Africa where ebola may have started. Great book for lay person to understand. Only half finished. Had to stop and write the review because of all the ebola in the news now. WHO has an ebola map that is interactive...very scary.

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