

# THE HOT ZONE BY RICHARD PRESTON



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## Amazon.com Review

The dramatic and chilling story of an Ebola virus outbreak in a suburban Washington, D.C. laboratory, with descriptions of frightening historical epidemics of rare and lethal viruses. More hair-raising than anything Hollywood could think of, because it's all true.

## From Publishers Weekly

Far more infectious than AIDS, filoviruses (thread viruses) are relentless killer machines that consume a human body in days, causing a gruesome death. Symptoms include liquefying flesh, spurts of blood, black vomit and brain sludge. Outbreaks of the Ebola filovirus devastated Sudan and Zaire in 1976. And in 1989 Philippine monkeys in a Reston, Va., research lab, found to be infected with Ebola, were the target of a U.S. Army-led biohazard task force that decontaminated the lab, exterminating hundreds of monkeys to prevent the possible airborne spread of the disease to humans. In a horrifying and riveting report, portions of which appeared in the *New Yorker*, Preston ( *American Steel* ) exposes a real-life nightmare potentially as lethal as the fictive runaway germs in Michael Crichton's *The Andromeda Strain*. Preston plausibly argues that the emergence of AIDS, Ebola and other highly adaptable rain-forest viruses is a consequence of ecological ruin of the tropics. A movie based on this book, directed by Ridley Scott ( *Alien* ), will star Robert Redford. Author tour.

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## From School Library Journal

YA?Warning?not for faint hearts or weak stomachs! In 1989, an obscure filovirus travels from the African rain forest to a lab near Washington, D.C., where the monkeys quickly sicken and die. Preston traces the history of the Warburg and Ebola filoviruses in minute, horrific detail that is as fascinating to read as it is alarming to contemplate?these filoviruses have the capability to mutate and possibly cross species. There are extraneous descriptions of scenery and of the characters' lives, but these passages serve to relieve the mounting tension and terror as the virus spreads and the CDC, the Army, and a private firm work out a containment plan to prevent a mass epidemic. YAs interested in science or fans of Stephen King or Michael Crichton will find this a fast-paced medical chiller right to the last disturbing page.?Judy Sokoll, Fairfax County Public Library, VA

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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.

From the Paperback edition.

- Sales Rank: #5097425 in Books
- Published on: 1996-10-02
- Released on: 1996-10-02
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Binding: Hardcover

Amazon.com Review

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97 of 99 people found the following review helpful.

Truly terrifying

By Illya Kuryakin

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.

158 of 172 people found the following review helpful.

A Nonfiction Thriller

By Debbie Lee Wesselmann

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.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Great read for healthcare workers and interested folks

By Wyogirl

**THIS** is the real story. I read it the first time while it was unfolding and everyone was riveted to the outbreak, saw the CDC scientists on then groundbreaking and current TV interviews while they were figuring out what was going on with the first Ebola outbreak. This book follows their field work and their research and travails while trying to prevent anyone else from spreading it around. Of course we had the recent outbreak which really spread like wildfire. The hot zone is level 4 at the CDC, which houses the worst viruses, like smallpox and Ebola. AIDS is on level 3. This is a graphic and SCARY book. It gets preachy at the end, which bored me somewhat after all the excitement.

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