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Featured Item:

VIRUS GROUND ZERO

by Ed Regis (Author)



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Editorial Reviews

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Ever since Richard Preston's startling book *The Hot Zone*, killer viruses like Ebola, Lassa, Marburg and the hanta viruses have been huge at the box office--replacing bigger monsters as the scariest of horrors. Regis tells the story of how the Center for Disease Control (CDC) dealt efficiently with the most recent real-life outbreak of Ebola in Kikwit, Zaire in 1995. Although they never found the source of the outbreak, CDC scientists stopped it completely within a month. Initial panic by local medical authorities was stemmed with swift isolation of the infected and the training of staff to deal with this incurable horror using the latest technology: "rubber gloves, plastic gowns and face masks." Regis suggests that the threat from viruses has been overblown; his account of the CDC's heroic efficiency is certainly reassuring.

From Publishers Weekly

Despite outbreaks of headline-grabbing viral diseases such as Ebola and Marburg in which victims suffer uncontrollable bleeding and quickly die, Regis (Who Got Einstein's Office?) believes that the public's perception of an apocalyptic threat posed by emerging killer viruses is largely an illusion fostered by the Centers for Disease Control's global success in discovering undetected pathogens. This vivid report focuses on the CDC team of scientists and physicians dispatched from Atlanta headquarters to Zaire to fight an Ebola epidemic in 1995. The narrative

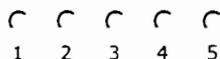
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The Hot Zone by
Richard Preston

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also jumps back and forth to cover the CDC's drive to eradicate smallpox in the 1960s, its swift work in identifying a 1993 hantavirus epidemic on a New Mexican Navajo reservation and its efforts against Legionnaires' disease, Lassa fever, swine flu and other pathogens. Regis interweaves a history of the CDC, from its origins as a small, narrowly focused malaria-eradication agency in WWII to its modern role as hub of the planet's disease-fighting forces. This balanced report makes an impressive counterweight to more cautionary books such as Richard Preston's *The Hot Zone* and Laurie Garrett's *The Coming Plague*.
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From School Library Journal

YA. The report of an outbreak of Ebola at Kikwit Hospital, Zaire, reached the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta in May, 1995, and the famed virus hunters began their work. They traced the outbreak backwards, from the present patient, to the individual who infected him, to the individual who infected him, etc., until they reached ground zero?the first person to have contracted the virus. The next step was to discover what insect, animal, or other organism harbored the virus and infected the ground zero victim. As Regis follows this trail, he relates the history of the CDC, the foremost institution of its kind in the world. Regis and Richard Preston (*The Hot Zone*) come to diametrically opposed views about the potential threat from the Marburg and Ebola viruses. Regis believes that they pose no danger to humanity, and states the numbers (of outbreaks and resultant deaths) to substantiate his position. The book is not for browsing or for easy-to-retrieve information, because there is no index. It will require concentration, but the explanations of molecular biology are very readable and easy to understand, and the style is lively and engaging. Teachers and librarians should suggest this modern equivalent of Paul De Kruif's *Microbe Hunters* (Harcourt, 1966) to students who enjoyed Michael Crichton's *Andromeda Strain* (Knopf, 1969) and Robin Cook's *Outbreak* (Berkley, 1988), or who love books of medical detection.?Judy Sokoll, formerly at Fairfax County Public Library, VA
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From Library Journal

Like Joseph McCormick and Susan Fisher-Hoch's *Level 4: Virus Hunters of the CDC* (LJ 7/96), this book provides a popularly written, gripping account of Centers for Disease Control (CDC) investigators battling frightening, exotic diseases. But there are major differences. McCormick and Fisher-Hoch are professionals recounting their own experiences as CDC field researchers. Science writer Regis (Nano, LJ 3/15/95) is a critical layman, making it clear that while he admires the CDC's accomplishments, he feels it is a bureaucracy that has expanded into too many "peripheral" areas. Because Regis claims that the threat of

emerging diseases has been greatly overstated, some public libraries may feel that this book would be a useful counterbalance to titles such as Richard Preston's *The Hot Zone* (LJ 8/94). But though it is true that the Ebola and Marburg viruses are not a major public health threat in developed countries, Regis does us a potentially dangerous disservice in paying little or no attention to such major problems as AIDS, the increasing resistance of "old" disease organisms to antibiotics, and other dangers related to the ability of disease organisms to adapt and evolve. Laurie Garrett's *The Coming Plague* (LJ 9/15/94) or Christopher Wills's *Yellow Fever, Black Goddess* (LJ 9/15/96) provide better information.
 -?Marit MacArthur, Auraria Lib., Denver
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The New York Times Book Review, Ann Finkbeiner

In spite of the occasional grimness of the subject, fun to read ... the anecdotes are gripping and Mr. Regis writes a good detective story.

Ingram

Focusing on the CDC's top investigators and their most compelling stories, a collection of germ warfare tales chronicles the history of the CDC and follows its physicians' battles with deadly diseases throughout the world.

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