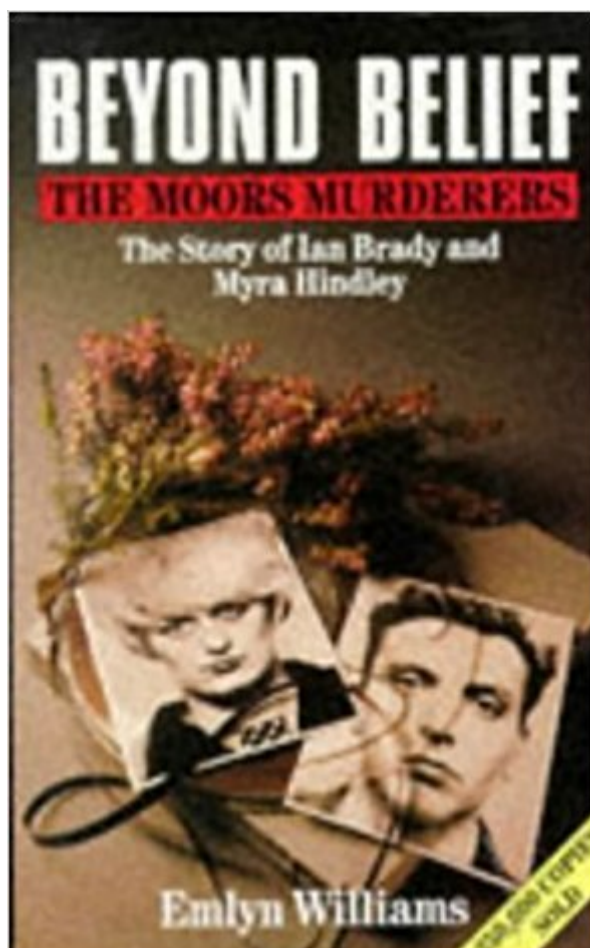


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Beyond Belief: Moors Murders



Synopsis

Emlyn Williams' classic account of the notorious Moors Murderers, Ian Brady and Myra Hindley, who between 1962 and 1965 abducted, brutally abused and murdered five children - Pauline Reade, John Kilbride, Keith Bennett, Lesley Ann Downey and Edward Evans - and buried them in shallow graves on Saddleworth Moor, in Lancashire.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Here's the thing: Once you read this book, you'll never forget it. It will give you such a case of the creeps you may conveniently leave it behind when you move house; donate it to the library; but it will stick with you and you'll be drawn to it, because to this day, there is really no explanation for these crimes. And no resolution for the emotions you will be left with after reading about them.

Caveat emptor. Williams' has aptly titled his book "Beyond Belief". He has reconstructed his narrative from research, interviews, and police and trial materials (now sealed until 2027). He's tried to make a kind of map to try and find the answer, the motives for these killings. What it turns out to be is more of a maze. He takes everything into account about the killers; he knows their backgrounds, their upbringings, the era; he knows how they spent their time, what they read, ate and drank, what they talked about. He's seen (and heard) the evidence of their crimes. What shocks him and the reader the most is the complete banality of these murders. The cruelty in the choice of victim; the almost bad-fairy-tale-like concept of the innocent child beguiled into the gingerbread house, which turns out to be inhabited by witches and monsters. Probably the most disturbing thing about this couple is they did not fit the profile of the usual type of killer. Nobody saw it coming; and it is this element that shows such extreme cruelty. That this was the part they deliberately enjoyed is

the irredeemable aspect, which has made them unworthy of anything but contempt. Williams leaves the actual crimes in the ether, where they haunt us. He leaves description till the last one - where he has an eyewitness account.

I was 9 when the Moors Murders case broke. I clearly remember the coverage in Life magazine--the black and white photos of the moors, the pictures of the murdered children (Lesley Ann Downey, John Kilbride and Edward Evans), and especially the iconic mug shots of Ian Brady and Myra Hindley which were simply terrifying and unforgettable. The case has haunted me ever since, not surprisingly, as I was close to the same age as some of Brady and Hindley's victims when the case broke. "Beyond Belief" was the first book I read about this case, more than 30 years ago. Several years back I bought a used copy of the first U.S. edition (published in 1968) and I have re-read it several times. "Beyond Belief" is a mixture of fact and what Williams called "surmise"--and this is clearly stated in his foreword. He writes: "Marshaling the established facts of most 'chronicles of murder', the writer is faced with gaps between those facts which it is doubtful will ever be filled, because the people able to fill them are either dead or unwilling to cooperate (in this case, the guilty man and the guilty woman). Hence the necessity for 'surmise'; that is, between one set of established facts and the next, a reconstruction of behavior, conversation, and thoughts based entirely on the facts, aiming at complete concordance with them, and in no way allowed to conflict with them" (on page viii of my edition). In this regard it is rather like "In Cold Blood" although Capote did not include a statement saying that some dialogue and situations were his creations. One example is the last scene in the book, in which Alvin Dewey, the law officer who led the investigation of the murders of the Clutter family, has a conversation with one of Nancy Clutter's girl friends at the town cemetery.

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