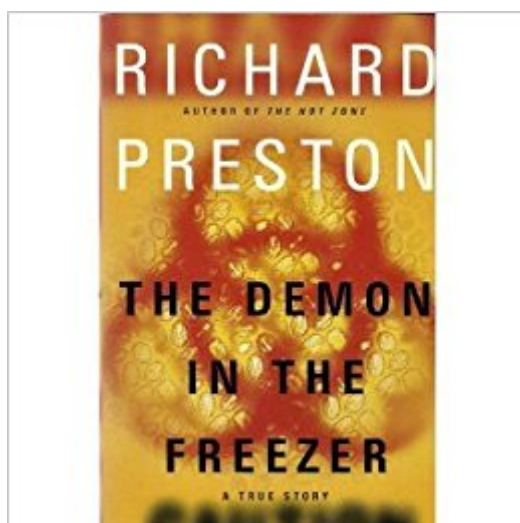


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The Demon In The Freezer: A True Story



Synopsis

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in the USA, the western world had to deal with a new threat: bioterrorism. In October 2001, a series of anthrax attacks through the postal system caused chaos and fear. But there was a far greater danger that had government security advisers around the world even more alarmed: smallpox. In his terrifying account of what happened, and what could still happen, Richard Preston reveals the true horror faced by victims of smallpox, raises serious questions about what happened to the smallpox viruses that were kept in storage after the disease was 'eradicated' in 1979, and shows just how easy it would be to create new strains of smallpox that would be able to overcome any vaccination, leaving the population defenceless.

Book Information

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: Random House; 1st Edition edition (2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0965619664

ISBN-13: 978-0965619660

Product Dimensions: 9 x 6 x 0.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (425 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #864,141 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #159 in [Books > History > Military > Weapons & Warfare > Biological & Chemical](#)

Customer Reviews

T. S. Eliot's bleak vision of the future doesn't even begin to include the gloomy prognostications revealed in this book. That terrorists will either acquire or develop biological weapons capable of destroying all human life is not just a possibility, it's a probability, as Preston makes abundantly clear in this update on biological weapons development. This book is the ultimate wake-up call. Even if you want to sleep after reading this, you may not be able to. Of the several biological weapons which have been under development in the past twenty-five years, smallpox is by far the most lethal and contagious, and irresponsible scientists have genetically engineered it in the past few years to make vaccination useless against it. Antidotes are unknown because humans are the only hosts for smallpox, and there is no way to run a test study of their efficacy. Preston points out, "It has taken the world twenty years to reach roughly fifty million cases of AIDS. [A single case of smallpox in an unprotected population] can reach that point in ten to twenty weeks." A massive

research and development program for weapons grade smallpox and plague, along with the MIRV missiles and warheads to deliver them abroad, continued, unknown and unmonitored, in the Soviet Union for twenty years after smallpox was officially eradicated in 1978. The whereabouts of the twenty tons of "hot," genetically altered smallpox are currently unknown. According to a defecting Russian scientist, even the Soviet researchers do not know where it went, but "they think it went to North Korea." Iran and Iraq are also believed to have "benefited" from this research and to have ongoing, active bioweapons research programs.

Richard Preston has written a frightening book. Starting and ending with the Anthrax attacks on the United States. Preston has talked to many of the top bioweapons engineers in the world and his research shows in this outstanding book. Full of information from accross the world. The history of Smallpox, the eradication effort by the World Health Organization. The background on Anthrax. Side stories to Ebola. The most dangerous virus's in the world are addressed in this book. The book examines the threat of Smallpox and explains why most people in the know about infectious disease's still consider it the worst the world has ever seen, even worse than plague. The book touches on Biopreparat (for a more in depth look read Biohazard by Ken Alibek) and the Russian stockpiles of Smallpox that they have weaponized and put into missiles to attack other countries. The CDC, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, in Atlanta still holds over 450 different strains of Smallpox. The book goes on to explain how many countries have Smallpox and this is not a little known fact. How genetic engineering could easily make Smallpox harder to contain than it already is. In today's world travel a Smallpox outbreak would mean hundreds of thousands of deaths and it would shut down international trade. it would bring the world to its knees. With 25 million people living within a couple hours travel of one another an outbreak in a third world county could show up in the United States in a few days. And this is not taking into account the possibility of a direct bioweapons attack on the United States. Before it was diagnosed, it would be spread around the world by air travel. This book is well written, reads easily, is full of information and very thought provoking.

Richard Preston's first work of non-fiction, "The Hot Zone" was a gruesome look at emerging viruses in general, and the Ebola virus in particular. However, no matter how grotesque it got, the reader could detach themselves from the book because Ebola is basically unheard of in the developed world, and isn't particularly effective at spreading (it kills its victims to quickly). His latest, "The Demon in the Freezer" is another story altogether. In it, he discusses the appalling specter of

smallpox in general, and weaponized smallpox in particular. By using the anthrax attacks of 2001 as a jumping off point, he delves into a fascinating exploration of a disease that most people consider eradicated. Unfortunately, Preston reveals that this is far from the case. While it is true that smallpox hasn't occurred naturally in 25 years, it is accepted (if not altogether proven) that the Russians have significant stockpiles of particularly virulent smallpox. Moreover, it seems probable that some of this material has found its way into the hands of other actors (Iran, Iraq, North Korea). Finally, given the abundance of smallpox samples available just three decades ago, it seems likely that parallel programs could have been pursued in any number of countries. In clear (if you've studied any biology at all, you should be fine with the terms in this book, and there is a glossary), vibrant language, Preston explores the personalities and institutions involved in trying to understand what smallpox today would mean. With a significant portion of the population having never been vaccinated, and the efficacy of 30-year-old vaccinations in serious doubt, it is a certainty that the release of even "natural" smallpox would be an absolutely devastating event.

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