

## The River : A Journey to the Source of HIV and AIDS

*By Edward Hooper*

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While science has devoted much of its efforts to finding a cure for AIDS, the sources of this deadly epidemic remain largely unexamined. Distinguished science journalist Edward Hooper presents the meticulously researched -- and highly readable -- history of HIV and its possible origins. Pursuing leads across the U.S., the Caribbean, Europe, and Africa, Hooper pieces together the tantalizing clues offered by long-archived blood samples, early AIDS-like cases (such as the "Manchester sailor" case of 1959), immunodeficiency viruses (SIVs), and the medical interventions in Africa and elsewhere that may have played a role in SIVs' crossover into humans. Hooper examines over two dozen theories of origin, and eventually discards most of them. What remains is a remarkable and well-supported theory for the sudden appearance of AIDS, and the definitive story of its lethal spread. Drawing on more than 4,000 sources and 600 interviews, *The River* is a thorough and provocative investigation into the most terrible epidemic of the twentieth century.

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## **The River : A Journey to the Source of HIV and AIDS** By Edward Hooper Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

For all the devastation and suffering AIDS has caused worldwide, we have devoted surprisingly little attention to its beginnings. Former UN official and BBC correspondent Edward Hooper hopes to find the source of AIDS in *The River*, a stunningly comprehensive yet deeply engaging scientific history of the disease. Through more than 10 years of research comprising over 600 interviews and untold hours of library work, Hooper has uncovered a complex, interlocking set of stories--of scientific research, of medical assistance to the Third World, of political and economic exigencies that drive the courses of our lives--and brought them together in over 1,000 pages of text, footnotes, references, and illustrations.

His thesis, that HIV made the jump from simians to humans via the administration of oral polio vaccine in Africa in the 1950s, is still controversial, but his arguments are powerful, broad, and undeniable--all that is lacking is conclusive proof. Like a good scientist (and, sad to say, unlike any HIV researcher to date), he offers several easy tests of his hypothesis. His tales of brilliant epidemiological deductions, biochemical comparisons, and physiological insights ought to convince the medical establishment that the answer can and should be found, both to help us deal with the current crisis and to keep us from creating new ones of its ilk. In a litigation-weary world, though, it seems that it will take the kind of tireless, impartial research found in *The River* to show us--and our leaders--that blame should take a back seat to truth when extreme circumstances demand it. --*Rob Lightner*

#### From Library Journal

For possibly thousands of years, the simian precursor to the AIDS virus existed among chimpanzees in central Africa. How did it jump species to humans? And why did it happen in the middle of the 20th century? Hooper's radical conclusion is that it was passed on as the result of well-meaning but misguided human intervention. He contends that experimental polio vaccines that were administered widely among populations near where AIDS emerged were manufactured from infected chimp kidneys. The author, a BBC correspondent in Africa, spent over a decade researching this book, in which he quotes from hundreds of interviews and cites thousands of articles from medical journals; his views cannot be easily dismissed. Aware that his theory is controversial, he calls for an independent council of scientists to investigate the matter. Whether that occurs or not, Hooper raises many issues that merit the attention of the global medical community. This very readable book is for all libraries. AGregg Sapp, Univ. of Miami Lib., Coral Gables  
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#### Review

"...a profoundly serious and important book...timely..." -- *Chicago Tribune*, 3/26/00

This is a scientific blockbuster about the origin of AIDS. It is in the great tradition of scientific detective stories .... It is also a pathbreaking endeavor in integrative investigation, cutting across the usual disciplines and involving everything from molecular biology to subtle interviewing strategies. Finally, it is intensely engaging to read. -- *Professor Brian Martin, Department of Science and Technology Studies, University of New South Wales*

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**Christian Robbins:**

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**Irma Patterson:**

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