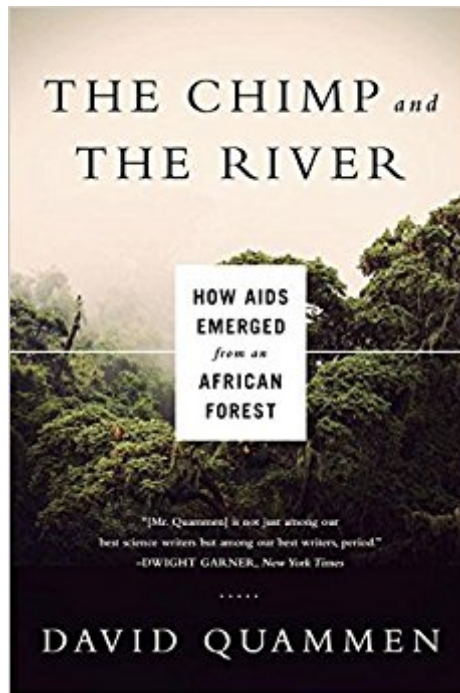




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# **The Chimp And The River: How AIDS Emerged From An African Forest**



## Synopsis

In this "frightening and fascinating masterpiece" (Walter Isaacson), David Quammen explores the true origins of HIV/AIDS. The real story of AIDS—how it originated with a virus in a chimpanzee, jumped to one human, and then infected more than 60 million people—is very different from what most of us think we know. Recent research has revealed dark surprises and yielded a radically new scenario of how AIDS began and spread. Excerpted and adapted from the book *Spillover*, with a new introduction by the author, Quammen's hair-raising investigation tracks the virus from chimp populations in the jungles of southeastern Cameroon to laboratories across the globe, as he unravels the mysteries of when, where, and under what circumstances such a consequential "spillover" can happen. An audacious search for answers amid more than a century of data, *The Chimp and the River* tells the haunting tale of one of the most devastating pandemics of our time.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Compelling” [an] utterly gripping story. — Abigail Zuger, *The New York Times* “To call David Quammen one of our greatest science writers is to belittle him. He is one of our greatest writers, period.” — Hampton Sides, best-selling narrative historian and editor at large at *Outside* magazine “[An] intense study of the origins of AIDS. With Sherlockian verve | Quammen’s portrait of the real ‘Patient Zero’ is a masterful summing-up of the evidence.” — Nathan Wolfe, *Nature*

David Quammen is the author of *The Song of the Dodo*, among other books. He has been honored by the American Academy of Arts and Letters and is the recipient of a John Burroughs Medal and the National Magazine Award. He lives in Bozeman, Montana.

Read this book in two days! Absolutely fascinating! I had read Edward Hoopers book "The River: A Journey to the Source of HIV and AIDS" which gives account to the possible origins of HIV to the polio vaccine campaign conducted in Africa, but David Quammen's book investigates further. I don't want to spoil this book, but I would recommend this book to anyone who is interested with the origins of HIV and how it has become one of the biggest pandemics known to man. Wonderful book!

It's been a while since I read a book on AIDS. I saw this book when I was getting other books on infectious disease, and put it aside for future reading. I had read "And the Band Played On" about 20 years ago, when I started working in a Lab on HIV. I knew so much had been found out concerning AIDS and where it came from. But much of this book was a surprise to me. I always felt that we didn't know the whole story about when AIDS actually started to infect the human race. The research that has been done in monkeys and apes, to determine the relationship between SIV which is simian immunodeficiency virus and HIV. Quammen provides a lot of background into what had previously been known and talked about. When I teach microbiology to my students I want to impress upon them the importance of knowing where these diseases come from. So many of the emerging diseases today are zoonoses, meaning they come from animals. Human invasion into habitats that used to rarely be seen by humans is introducing new viruses that some animals could live with, and others that were killers, no matter what the species. Quammen does a good job with the science. He obviously has a lot of practice in both the research and the writing. This book was incredibly interesting and definitely filled in gaps in my knowledge. I would recommend that readers be a bit familiar with AIDS before tackling this book. It assumes that the readers have a background in AIDS.

Quick read about the history of HIV. I didn't quite realize before purchasing (although I think it's clear, I just didn't pay attention) that this is taken from another of his books. He references that a few times in this book, and glosses over some details that I think must be explained in further detail in the larger work. I would have liked to see more discussion of some of the biology, as he does often skip the details of how exactly how the microbiologists have derived their findings. Also, be warned that a good chunk of the middle of the book is pure speculation about the Cut Hunter

hypothesis and how the virus may have spread to other humans from the Cut Hunter. That was a bit disappointing from a science writer. If you are looking for an easy to read introduction into how scientists trace zoonotic diseases, this will be a great book for you! If you want something more in-depth, I would suggest reading Spillover or Pepin's more in-depth book.

A good but not a great book. Basically it says "The AIDS virus developed in this geographical area in Cameroon, as a disease in chimps. Somehow, through blood-blood contact, it jumped to one or a few people and figured out how to survive. One of those people made it to the big city (then Leopoldville, now Kinshasa), had sex, and spread the disease. A few other people got it, but it was no big deal until, many years later, it found its way into people who left Kinshasa and took it around the world." The interesting part is the sleuthing the virus back to that corner of Cameroon more than 100 years ago - the first part of the book. After that it becomes pretty dry and drab.

A book that is short but full of info and very well written. Traces the history of the dreaded disease in an intuitive manner

Mr. Quammen is a gifted writer and I'm glad he's given us this fascinating account of the origin of the AIDS pandemic. Just a heads up to help others who might otherwise repeat my mistake--I discovered after receiving the book that it is just one chapter of his book Spillover, which examines other zoonotic diseases as well. Had I known that I would have bought Spillover instead.

I am on page 91 of 140. This is a wonderful book that builds on information found in the "Patient Zero" episode from Radiolab podcast. The recreation of the "First" HIV carrier is long and unnecessary but overall well written and accessible to the public despite the medical heavy topic.

The science was told in such a way that I could not put the book down. The story is mostly known but was told in a human way that explains the details that put the timeline together and give understanding to a very real problem.

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