



Quicklet On Truman Capote's In Cold Blood

Larry Holzwarth

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ABOUT THE BOOK

When Truman Capote saw a three hundred word article in the New York Times describing the murder of a Kansas farm family he was intrigued. Having vague ideas of a new genre in writing he obtained an assignment to cover the story from the New Yorker and accompanied by his friend Harper Lee, headed to Holcomb, a small town in Finney county, Kansas. Capote and Lee interviewed anyone and everyone connected with the story, friends, neighbors, teachers, attorneys, investigators, and eventually, the murderers themselves.

Serialized in the New Yorker prior to publication in book form, In Cold Blood presents investigative journalism in the form of a novel, effectively combining literature and reporting. The New York Review of Books called it “The best documentary of an American crime ever written...” Other critics have not been so kind, citing fictionalized conversations, invented scenes, and fabricated events. Capote’s narrative contains no footnotes, nor does he cite specific sources for any of the conversations in the book.

MEET THE AUTHOR

Larry Holzwarth is a freelance writer and submarine veteran. A former US Navy systems analyst, he has been a corporate writer on diverse subjects, a professional trainer, recruiter and lecturer. A lifelong student of history, he enjoys reading, camping, hiking and Reds baseball. After traveling extensively he returned to his native midwest where he resides near Cincinnati.

EXCERPT FROM THE BOOK

Capote paints an image of a bucolic community, basking in the crisp sunshine of a November day as well as in small town American innocence. A prosperous and well respected farmer, admired in his community for his character as well as his family, Herb Clutter is the quintessential American father. Though his wife has been ill, with what would now be called depression, the community rallies around the family with support.

Compared to this picture of small town happiness is the sordid world of small time criminals Perry Smith and Richard Hickock. They arrive in Holcomb, Kansas, armed with a bowie knife, a shotgun, and the erroneous information that the Clutter home housed a safe filled with a large amount of cash. They creep in and out of town in one night. In the morning the Clutter’s are found dead, murdered by shotguns blasts delivered with the muzzle inches from each victim’s head. They are discovered by a friend of 16-year-old Nancy Clutter, coming to join her friend for church that Sunday morning.

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CHAPTER OUTLINE

Truman Capote's In Cold Blood

- + Introduction
- + Truman Capote's Life in Brief
- + About Capote's Masterpiece
- + A Summary of In Cold Blood

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