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1. _____ EBOLA KILLS EVERYTHING IT TOUCHES

Malcolm Gladwell 7/17/95 (staff writer for *New Yorker* former NY chief for Washington post. "The Plague Year" *The New Republic*)

★ THE EBOLA VIRUS

★ African Ebola is one of the deadliest of known human viruses. It kills by clotting the blood of its victims, shutting off the flow of nutrients to key parts of the body and chewing through connective tissue, so that the infected literally cough their guts out. No one knows what animal serves as Ebola's natural host, but it can jump from species to species, from guinea pigs to humans, killing virtually everything it touches. There is no cure for Ebola. And there is no vaccine. On the three occasions that it has broken out among humans—twice in Zaire and once in the Sudan—it has left behind a trail of death. Only once [as of 1995] has Ebola made its way to North America and that occasion is the basis of Richard Preston's *The Hot Zone*. . . .

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EBOLA

15 HARMLESS AND EMPIRICALLY NOT A THREAT

Ed Regis 96 (former prof philosophy turned science writer. *Virus Ground Zero* reprinted *Epidemics: Opp. Vwpts.*)

The world's virologists themselves soon rose up against the oncoming tide of virus paranoia, and it was symbolically fitting that some of the most vocal among them were located in Africa, the very place where the fabled viruses hailed from. Margaretha Isaacs, the South African physician who'd stopped the transmission of Ebola virus at Ngaliema Hospital in Kinshasa during the original 1976 outbreak, said:

Ebola is of absolutely no danger to the world at large. It is a dangerous virus, but it's relatively rare and quite easily contained.

The virus needs the right conditions to multiply, whatever the virus is, be it Ebola or plague. It's not enough to just have the accident. The virus must first find itself in a favorable environment before it can affect anyone. The media is scaring the world out of its wits, and movies like *Outbreak* are doing people a great disservice.

Ed Rybicki, a virologist at the University of Cape Town, said:

The town of Kikwit has a population of five hundred thousand and extremely poor medical treatment centers, and yet only three hundred people died there. That is not anywhere near 90 percent of the entire population.

A simple yet very obvious statement of the facts. So if 499,700 people in Kikwit DIDN'T get Ebola, why are Americans so worried????

Indeed. The fact of the matter was that Ebola hemorrhagic fever, along with Marburg and Lassa, were diseases of poverty and bad hospitals. Although they thrived momentarily when they erupted in such environments, those same viruses were stopped cold every time they turned up in well-equipped medical institutions, whether in developed countries or elsewhere. When Marburg, the first of the unholy trio, showed up in Germany in 1967, it infected one round of twenty-five people, seven of whom died, then spread to six secondary cases among medical personnel and family members, all of whom lived. And that was the end of the Marburg epidemic.

The original Marburg incident was, and would remain, the largest human outbreak of any African hemorrhagic fever ever to appear in the developed West, and the virus had killed just seven people. Both Lassa and Ebola, the two other African hemorrhagic fever viruses, would arrive in Europe and the United States on several later occasions, but in none of those instances was there more than a single death and in no case was there person-to-person transmission of the virus. When in 1969 Penny Pinneo was brought to the Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center New York with Lassa fever, there were no cases of secondary transmission. In 1976, when Geoffrey Platt contracted Ebola in a London lab, the infection started and ended with him. When Lassa was brought into a suburban Chicago hospital in 1989, it got no farther than the first case. And in 1994 when a Swiss primate researcher with Ebola hemorrhagic fever was admitted to the University Hospital of Basel, the patient recovered and the infection stopped then and there.

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