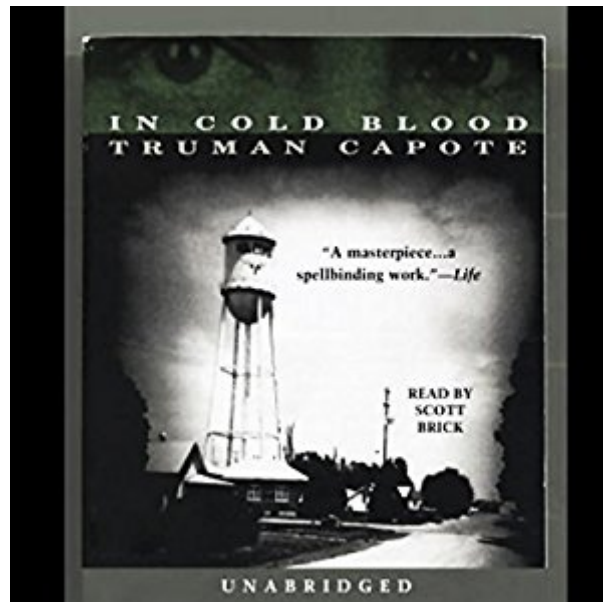


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# In Cold Blood



## Synopsis

On November 15, 1959, in the small town of Holcomb, Kansas, four members of the Clutter family were savagely murdered by blasts from a shotgun held a few inches from their faces. There was no apparent motive for the crime, and there were almost no clues. As Truman Capote reconstructs the murder and the investigation that led to the capture, trial, and execution of the killers, he generates both mesmerizing suspense and astonishing empathy. *In Cold Blood* is a work that transcends its moment, yielding poignant insights into the nature of American violence. From the Trade Paperback edition. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

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Version: Unabridged

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Audible.com Release Date: January 3, 2006

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B000E1ZA3C

Best Sellers Rank: #1 in Books > Travel > United States > Central #2 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Nonfiction > Travel #6 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Nonfiction > True Crime

## Customer Reviews

On November 15, 1959, in Holcomb, Kansas, the four members of the Clutter family were dragged from their beds in the early hours of the morning and tied up. All four were shot in the head with a shotgun at close range. None survived. The killers left few clues, and there was no apparent motive for the slayings. On assignment from the *New Yorker*, author Truman Capote, along with his assistant Nell Harper Lee, traveled to Holcomb in late 1959 to investigate the killings for an article. The article was completed, but still Capote remained in Holcomb. He conducted interviews with every person in town; he pored over police records and statements. Once the killers, drifters Perry Smith and Dick Hickock, were caught and sentenced, he even interviewed them on Death Row. The Clutter killings became an obsession for him; and that obsession turned into a book that would become a literary milestone, that would singlehandedly introduce a new genre to the literary world: the nonfiction novel. He called his piece of creative nonfiction *IN COLD BLOOD*, and it so

consumed him that it would be the last thing he'd ever write. I didn't expect this book to move me so deeply. In most true crime books that are written today (at least in my experience), the evidence is presented straightforwardly, unemotionally; the facts are dry and textbook-like. Such is not the case with *IN COLD BLOOD*. Capote's prose is mesmerizing. His descriptions of Holcomb and its inhabitants are vivid and lively. His research is impeccable, presented flawlessly, lushly, sweeping the reader away on waves of vibrant language. And his imagery is heartbreaking: Nancy Clutter teaching a neighbor to make a cherry pie, Dick Hickock deliberately hitting a dog on the highway, the Clutters' old mare standing alone in an overgrown pasture. With startling empathy, Capote transports his readers to the Holcomb, Kansas, of late 1959: We feel the tension and sorrow clouding the town; we watch as the police nearly crumble under the weight of their investigation; we're with Dick and Perry as they flee across the United States to Mexico, leaving a trail of bounced checks in their wake, and we're with them in their cells on Death Row. We're right there the whole time, from the day before the Clutters are killed to the day after their murderers are executed. And Capote is unflinching; he keeps us there, even when the honesty of his prose makes us uncomfortable, even when we can't imagine reading on but somehow can't seem to stop. And this is the genius of *IN COLD BLOOD*: It is a violent, unflinching account, sorrowful beyond belief (and made even more so because it's true); but, in the hands of a master like Capote, it's really hard to stop reading about this unfortunate family and their motiveless, pathetic murderers. This book made me sad, it made me shiver; but I'm glad I read it.

**\*\* PRODUCT UPDATE \*\*** In early 2013 the Modern Library (a division of Random House) reissued four Capote works: a new *PORTRAITS AND OBSERVATIONS*, a combined *OTHER VOICES*, *OTHER ROOMS* and *BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S*, the collected *SHORT STORIES* and this one -- *IN COLD BLOOD*. Dust jackets are in harmonizing colors and common typography (see product photos); the books themselves are hardbound, in classic ML beige. A good price, too. Of course, *IN COLD BLOOD* is still available in paperback, too, as it has been ever since the mid-1960s. The magnificence of "In Cold Blood" doesn't lie in the subject matter but in its treatment. There are--unfortunately--more depraved criminals and more elaborate police investigations detailed in a great many "true crime" accounts. But I doubt that any of them is as well written as "In Cold Blood." I haul my copy out every 2-3 years just to remind myself how wonderful the rhythms and nuances of the American language can be at the hands of a master. I am totally drawn into the lives of the prosperous and completely unsuspecting Clutter family of western Kansas and the two drifters, Perry and Dick, who by themselves didn't amount to much but together proved lethal that fall night

in 1959. A trivia note: Capote's research assistant on this book was Nell Harper Lee, who shortly after would become famous as the author of "To Kill a Mockingbird." I'd recommend Gerald Clarke's excellent biography "Capote" to learn about this one-of-a-kind book, its creation, reception, and how it affected the author's life. PRODUCT UPDATE (2012): The hardcover edition of IN COLD BLOOD with a photograph of the Clutter house on the cover is a quality edition issued by the Folio Society of Great Britain. I wish I could elaborate in a separate review but as you can see, I've already filed one review and will not let me file a separate one, despite the fact that this book has 31 (!) different formats. I will say that the Folio edition has a very intelligent introduction, and that it is the only version of IN COLD BLOOD I know of that has illustrations. They consist of black-and-white photographs of the Clutter family, the killers, the lawmen on the case, Garden City and the home village of Holcomb during that period. I own the volume and like all Folio society books, it is very well manufactured but not cheap.

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